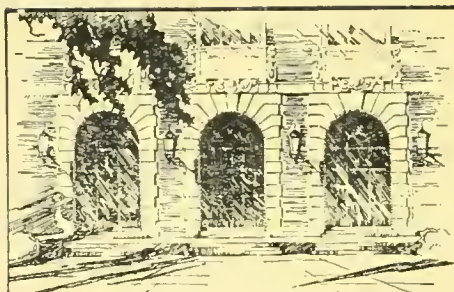


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MELCHIOR GORLES.

V O L . I.

MELCHIOR GORLES.

A Tale

OF MODERN MESMERISM.

BY

HENRY AITCHENBIE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, PICCADILLY.

1867.

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MELCHIOR GORLES.

CHAPTER I.

FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS FOR ONE GUINEA.

IT was on the Derby-day, I remember—the Derby-day of the year ——. Upon my word I cannot undertake to say what year to a certainty; although anybody of the most moderate pretensions to any knowledge or interest in sporting matters may within the next dozen pages or so, if he will only take the trouble to get on so far, find himself able to settle this important point without the least doubt or hesitation, though perhaps not altogether without some feeling of pity and contempt for me as an ignorant and simple individual. I am not a sporting character myself—I have never pretended to be so.

I am fully aware of my own deficiencies in this respect, and must humbly confess that it is with a sort of feeling of being out of my proper place, and as though I were almost guilty of a liberty and an intrusion whenever I do venture to go down to Epsom, and to try for a chance of seeing something of the

great race of the year, from as good a place as I can manage to squeeze myself into in the Grand Stand on the Derby-day.

Where in the whole world is to be found such another gathering together of the people?—where every one is sure to meet with every one else whom he has ever known, seen, or heard of.

Old friends and new, of all ranks of life, of all ages, and all degrees of acquaintance, collected from all parts of the three kingdoms—from all ends of the world, indeed, for that matter—recalling and renewing how many old associations, scenes, and recollections of every place one has been in, of every past year of one's life!

Here I have been on one side jammed by a sudden rush through the door against a noble duke, who, to my confusion, courteously apologises for temporarily inconveniencing the “funny-bone” of my elbow with his august ribs: the next minute I am pressed flat, like one of the biffins of his own native county, against the broad waistcoat of honest old Tom Korderoy, the jolly Norfolk farmer, who, years ago, used to give me such capital partridge shooting when I was at a private tutor's down in those parts. Now, again, I cannot help trampling on the very heels of little Chizzler, with whom I have been “*dead cuts*”

ever since I was compelled by a sense of public duty to convict him of mal-practices at *vingt-et-un*, at the chambers of a mutual friend in the Temple.

And there, hang him ! pressing close upon me in the rear is another unpleasant acquaintance in the person of Mr. Buckram, my tailor, who, if every one were to strictly insist upon claiming his own property, might even deprive me of the coat and *et ceteras* in which I am at this moment standing.

His present splendid appearance of a sporting gentleman at large, hardly, I think, agrees with the touching appeal for a remittance received through the post from that worthy himself, only this very morning as I was starting from home ; in which he alludes so feelingly to importunate creditors of his own, and engagements which must be met within twenty-four hours.

And so all around, without enumerating more examples of the same kind, one sees closely packed on all sides men one meets with everywhere every day—men one never by any chance meets anywhere else—men one has not seen for years—men one thought, and had every reason to believe, had died long ago in India or New Zealand. What a strange scene of jumble and crush and a regular pandemonium of excitement there is ! At every successive recurrence of the day, how you are invariably told the same

thing by every one you run against in the same excited tone, that there will be, that there must be, that there are, twenty, thirty, fifty thousand more people come down this time than have ever been known before upon the course.

And according to the usual custom of public regulations of any sort in this happy and free country, because in each succeeding year the numbers requiring to be accommodated increase, so of course it stands to reason that the space and accommodation, either by the encroachment of private boxes, or by cutting off half the lawn, or shutting off the best part of the balconies, or some other monopolizing alteration, is by an inverse proportion decreased; so that those who, like my humble self, are not amongst the initiated, or, as I have already confessed, do not feel quite at home in the midst of the crowd and turmoil, find themselves each year (literally as well as metaphorically speaking) rather more and more "*shoved to the wall.*"

But there, there, do we not all go down to the Derby to enjoy ourselves, and not to grumble? So let us make the best of circumstances, and feel as we ought, happy and pleased with everything.

Such, or something very like them, were the thoughts passing through my mind as, not having been able to make my way further than just through

the passage leading from the staircase to the front of the Grand Stand, I found myself gradually squeezed closer and closer against the iron rails which divide what is left of the Lawn from that portion more exclusively devoted to the betting-ring.

I might have felt contented with my place, or at any rate resigned, had it not been for the propinquity of a most excitable and purple-nosed individual, who just at the other side of the railings seemed to take a malignant joy in bellowing into my very ears ; so that besides the vibration of the interior arrangement of those organs from his stentorian tones, which were like the shrill notes of a cracked bassoon, I could actually feel my hair playing in the hot breezes of the wretch's poisonous breath, as louder and louder he poured forth the most reckless offers in regard to "laying any amount of odds, against any amount of horses," which I, his next neighbour, or I suppose any other individual of the thousands within ear-shot might feel inclined to name, "Bar one." In that hideous war-cry or refrain of "Barr-r-r one" did he seem more specially to take delight, yelling it out as I have said with ever-increasing vehemence, frequently even without the foregoing, and as I in my innocence should have thought, if for intelligibility only, necessary context.

Any chance of moving away seemed hopeless, willingly as I would have taken even an inferior position for seeing the forthcoming event, for we were literally packed like figs in a barrel, the broiling sun pouring down full upon our heads, and this horrible "Barr-r-r one" becoming more and more insufferable; when feeling a specially hard dig in the back with the point of a big stick, so specially pointed indeed as to be evidently intentional and denoting friendly recognition or even intimacy, and turning round, as well as under the circumstances I could manage any such movement, I to my great delight beheld—surely—my old friend and schoolfellow, Frank Lambard, nodding his head and grinning at me in my evident distress.

One moment's pause of consideration, scarcely amounting to doubt as to his identity,—though the dear old fellow's cheery face was disguised with a more than ordinary abundance of moustache and beard, and what was still to be seen of his once clear complexion was now tanned dark as mahogany, there was no mistaking those sparkling eyes, and that rattling, hearty laugh—Frank Lambard himself, whom I had not seen, or even heard of, for years.

Here was an example *àpropos* to my late reflections. To what feelings and memories did that recognition immediately give rise in my mind's eye! Lambard,

certainly, as the saying goes, is no chicken. Six feet one in his stockings, and broadly built in proportion. His name, even after this lapse of time, still ranks high amongst the demi-gods of dear old Eton. For two years captain of the eight, and nearly equally famous for his swiping in the playing fields: do they not still talk of his great fight on the Brocas with Jem Badger, the boat-cad?—still point out the solid oak panel in the upper school through which he smashed his fist, and the iron window-bar, in the chapel staircase, twisted round, as you may see it even to this day, by the strong gripe of Badger Lambard's mighty fingers?

For after that famous Brocas fight, as in the old days of chivalry the victors were accustomed to assume the honours and devices of those who had fallen before their prowess, even so had Frank Lambard's applauding peers and contemporaries conferred on their hero the style and title of his discomfited antagonist.

Even now—and more years than I begin to care to reckon have sped by since that day—looking back, as I see him in my memory, after the fight was over, examining his own eye-tooth—picked up and returned to him by an obsequious little courtier of a fourth-form boy—and in vain trying to fit it back into

its place: then flinging a sovereign (the only one he had) to the defeated cad, with an admonition to "get home, and learn not to interfere with a gentleman another time"—I could even now, I say, shout and cheer again, as we all shouted for and cheered him then till we were hoarse.

I could cry, as I should almost like to have cried at the time, then and there, but was obliged to refrain, as having only just got into the fifth form—a position in life in which any such exhibition of excited feelings was of course entirely out of the question.

But to return after this digression, for which I must apologise, but positively could not help, when that scene recurred to my vivid recollection—could I possibly have been more fortunate than just at that time to have thus encountered, or rather to have been discovered as I was in that crowd by my friend Lambard, of all men in the world?

"Come here out of that, 'Little one!'" he cried (I have not, I think, mentioned that I am myself rather under than above the average height: I was always, I might say, small of my age when a boy).

"Come out of that awfully bad place you are in there; stick to me, and I will see if I cannot manage to bring you down to the front, to see the great

event." And seizing me by the arm, in a grasp like a vice, Lambard proceeded deliberately to work his way through the densely-packed crowd, partly by sheer weight, though no violence, and partly by persuasion, for he seemed to have a word and a joke ready for every one, whether he knew them or not.

We thus found ourselves, really to my astonishment, in no time close down to the front railings, in as good a place for seeing as if we had had the first choice of the whole enclosure, and had been there, like some of the more prudent, since the earliest moment of admission in the morning.

"Now here we are, you see, and here we will abide," said my friend and leader, as I may well call him; "though you may come here and stand in front of me," gently handing forward a stoutish and short old gentleman, who was just commencing a remonstrance at this unlooked-for intrusion between himself and the course; "and what is more, sir, you will have no need to take off your hat, unless you prefer a *coup-de-soleil*, which would probably be your fate—and a great pity, too, because you seem such a nice little round gentleman, and I can see perfectly well over you, and your hat and all into the bargain."

The little old gentleman thus benignly addressed was growing very red in the face, and though he took

the place offered to him, seemed inclined to express some sort of resentment or at least indignation at the familiarity; but Lambard, taking no further notice of him, was addressing himself to me again as "Little one," which from any one else I should certainly not have been inclined to allow, but well knew that upon him all remonstrance or expostulation on the subject would be utterly thrown away.

"What special interest have you in the Derby, my dear 'Little one?' he inquired. "Come now, what will you give me for the ticket I have drawn in my club lottery?—a real genuine live horse, and an actual starter, too, I am told, though the odds are at something like sixty to one against him. You know nothing about the horses, you say?—no more do I, my dear fellow. I have been away so long, and entirely out of the whole sort of thing, that until three days ago I do not think I had even heard the names of half-a-dozen of the favourites, and those only from what I picked up in the smoking-room of my club. I myself have long ago (luckily, I so far really believe,) established the firmest faith in my own special bad luck. So constant and invariable has mine always been, that no horse in which I was even remotely interested could by any possible chance hope to win. Indeed, I verily believe that were I even to back

them all, or to bet that one of the thirty starters must come in first to the winning post, they would somehow or other all contrive to break down, or else all thirty come in together in a dead heat. It is only a wonder to me that I should have drawn any horse at all—an actual live one, that is, whose name is on the correct card, as a positive starter: but as I do not happen to have any sort of ill-feeling against the owner of that noble quadruped, whoever he may be, and as, I say, I am morally certain that if I can possibly gain anything by it he has not the vaguest chance of winning, partly moved by that truly generous and disinterested sentiment, and partly in consideration of my happiness in having thus fallen in with you, my dear ‘Little one,’ who are such an old and valued friend of days gone by, I will now offer that said ticket to you, to have and to hold for your own sole and special benefit, with all its advantages and chances of gaining the grand prize of no less than five hundred pounds, for that is the princely sum total to which the winner will be entitled, all for one guinea; by which transaction, besides the self-reward of performing a good deed in thus removing my spell of bad luck from, I have no doubt, a well-trained and well-deserving animal, I shall at the same time honestly realize a whole shilling sterling

by the Derby. It cost me one pound; and you shall have it, I tell you, for one pound one. So here you are, five hundred pounds actually going for one guinea only. Any advance on one guinea? for one pound one shilling only, is now offered this alarming sacrifice: going—going—”

“Done!” screamed a shrill pipe of a voice suddenly from behind. “I will give you a guinea for it.”

Lambard was leaning with his arm on my shoulder while thus rattling on in his noisy way, and in an instant I distinctly felt a shock exactly like that of a powerful electric retort, catch him up as it were with a sharp and sudden check.

Turning round as I did instantly to look up into his face, to my surprise, I saw that his colour had changed to a ghastly paleness; and his eyes were fixed with the wild expression of a frightened horse upon a very small, strange-looking individual, who was working up towards us, literally in between the legs and coat skirts of the half-dozen people who were immediately around us.

Taking into account a disproportionately tall hat, and very extra high heels to his boots, the stranger thus approaching us could not have measured much more than four feet six or seven inches in height; but

though no doubt a dwarf, his head and limbs seemed all in proportion, and symmetrically formed.

His features were common-place enough, though in the hasty glance I had at him, even in the astonishment of the moment I was struck with the extraordinary sly and malicious expression in his narrow little slits of eyes ; and there was a most repulsively sarcastic grin about the sides of his mouth, as he made his way close up to us, half hesitatingly, and then as though pretending after a moment's doubt positively to recognise my friend, with—

“Ah ! is it you really then, Lambard ? It is so long since we have met, that I did not know you at first, though I thought I recognised the voice. I will take that ticket off your hands, since your friend here—Mr. Littleton, did you say ?”—with a half bow and a grin towards myself (confound his impudence!)—“does not seem to accept your handsome offer. You ought to give me the next refusal, you know, for I have become a near relation of yours since we last met. Bless me, how long it seems ! A guinea you said, I think, didn't you ? Thank you. If it should turn out to be the winner, it would have been a pity to have let the chance go out of the family, you know, ha ! ha !”

I feel that I cannot attempt to convey the look and

manner of triumphant malignity with which these few sentences were squeaked out by this remarkable little party in the shrill tones of a cracked pitch pipe.

I again looked round to see what answer Lambard, who had just before been in such boisterous spirits, and so full of fun and chaff, would have ready for this impertinent fellow. To my great amazement, he seemed utterly spell-bound, with his eyes still staring fixedly, and an expression, not of amusement or even perhaps of scornful contempt which I might have expected, but of actual terror on his face. He made no attempt at any reply, but holding out the ticket which he had just before been waving about in his hand, exchanged it for the proffered coin without seeming to know what he was about; and then as if with a very strong effort over himself—

“For heaven’s sake, my dear fellow, help me to get out of this,” he said, in a deep hoarse whisper: “let us get away from here—anywhere.”

And in the next moment, with a violent rush, he was pulling me along by the arm through the closely-packed crowd, with tenfold the impetuosity with which we had so lately before made our way down to the front of the enclosure.

“Who is he? what is the matter with you, my good friend?” I gasped out, as we arrived almost

breathless with the frightful exertion of fighting our way through that dense mass of obstructive humanity ; and then for the first time the thought which struck me, as not the least odd part of the affair was, that the strange little man should have been so anxious to buy that ticket without knowing or having even asked what horse's name was upon it.

Lambard had certainly never proclaimed it. I was in the very act of asking him ; for at the place to which we had then struggled, in the door-way leading through into the interior of the stand, further progress was absolutely impossible.

“ What horse was it, by the way, you thus parted with ? ” I was, I say, in the very act of inquiring, when arose the loud cry of, “ They're off ! they're off ! ” “ Hats off in front there, if you please. Hats off. Down there in front—get down.”

A spasmodic movement runs through the whole dense mass, as every one of which it is composed makes a last simultaneous effort to better his chance of seeing. “ Every man for himself,” is felt by each separate individual ; and then in another moment the whole of that vast multitude of thousands of human beings are held together in one strong, common feeling of intense interest and excitement.

A distant murmur from the further corner of the

course comes rolling on, and gathering force like a huge wave of the sea, as it draws nearer and nearer, and then bursts into a gigantic roar, as the many-coloured phalanx, brilliant in the sun, flashes by like a meteor. There is a momentary lull of breathless expectation, and then a roar ten thousand times louder than before proclaims that Number 16 has been run up at the signal-post; and the name of the fortunate winner (perhaps, as in the instance I speak of,) hitherto comparatively unknown, is now repeated by ten times ten thousand mouths, all talking and holloaing at once; and before another hour has passed will be known, and again and again repeated, in every quarter of the United Kingdom.

“You were asking the name of the horse which was on that ticket, were you not?” said Lambard, in a hard and unnatural voice, through his tightly-clenched teeth. “You may hear them shouting it.”

“Caractacus?”

“Yes, that was it. He was, I believe, considered to be a hopeless outsider; but the moment I made it over to that fellow, I felt a conviction that that horse would win.”

Then, with a fierce burst of execration, he turned, and rushed away through the building, and out of the doorway on the other side.

I hardly knew why I felt so strongly impelled to follow him as I did. It was ridiculous to suppose that I could be of any help or protection to a great fellow like him, who was twice my own size, even if I had had time to reflect that there could possibly have been a need of anything of the sort. If my motive was only a latent curiosity, or say interest, in the curious rencontre and scene which I had thus chanced to witness, I was not at the time conscious of any such feeling.

But, heedless of the doorkeeper's friendly warning of having passed out without having taken a return-ticket, I ran out after my excited friend, who was striding away straight down the side of the hill at the rate of twenty miles an hour.

He seemed surprised when, puffing and blowing as I was, I managed to bring myself sufficiently within ear-shot to shout to him to stop.

Again I noticed that same expression of wild fear pass over his face, as he turned round to see who was in pursuit of him ; but there was something of relief and satisfaction in his voice, as he said—

“Oh ! it's you, is it, Little one ? Why, what on earth do you want, or mean, by running after me in this manner ?”

I told him that it was so long since we had met,

that I did not want to lose sight of him directly again; but that if he liked I would walk with him, as I did not care to go back to the Stand, not to speak of having forfeited my right of re-entry.

“Are you man enough to walk across to Kingston?” he asked. “We shall get back to town more quietly that way, without the chance of again meeting—anybody,” he added, after a pause, “whom one does not care to meet. It is seven or eight miles across, and perhaps you may find the sun too warm.”

It was, indeed, a piping hot day in June, and the road would be, I knew, over our very boots in dust; but the tone of doubt in which Lambard spoke, decided me. So only stipulating that he should slightly moderate the tremendous pace at which he had started, we stepped out without another word.

CHAPTER II.

INFLUENCES.

LAMBARD still for some time seemed to be brooding over the rencontre which had evidently so thoroughly upset him. For at least a mile and a half we trudged on, side by side, in profound silence. From time to time I noticed that he knit his brows, and clutched his stout oak stick in a tighter grasp, as though his thoughts were stern ones; when, quite suddenly, he pulled up, to ask me if I had ever heard of or believed at all in "Influences?"

"What do you mean?" I asked. "What sort of influences? I certainly should not have been influenced by you to have started on this frightfully hot and dusty walk of eight miles, if I had thought you were going thus to shut up and trudge on without exchanging a single word with an old friend, whom you have not met for so long."

To that remark of mine he only vouchsafed a laugh, something more like his own usual hearty manner;

and then, as if dissatisfied with himself for thus relenting, assumed a darker aspect even than before, and we plodded on for another quarter of an hour in the same grim silence; then, just as suddenly as before, he seemed determined to shake off his dark mood; thanked me warmly for the friendly feeling I had shown in coming so far with him, and without further preface began there and then a full explanation of what he meant by "Influences."

"Influences," he repeated again, solemnly, "such as those which, as sure as I am here walking by your side, were exerted over me by that loathsome little wretch to whom you saw me, in spite of myself, compelled to hand over that ticket—(though I feel even now that if I had kept it, the five hundred odd which it has gained, and of which, under existing circumstances, I should just now have been most specially glad, would never have come to me, so I put that out of the question, for the horse would not have won)—but whether by the influence of our stars or of our nati- vities coinciding, or rather clashing, or some of the spiritualist-mesmeric contrivances, I cannot say; but all I know for a fact is, that somehow or another that little toad"—(he seemed to find a different epithet to apply to his enemy every time it became necessary to recur to him)—"that little toad exercises a most un-

accountable and irresistible influence and control over me and my actions.

“You may smile,” he went on, bitterly; “but though I can in no way explain or even describe it, I have myself as little doubt of the fact, as that I have a soul to be saved. Avoiding—flying from that fellow, as I have always done—he has turned up against me continually; and though accidental as our meetings at all sorts of times and places have often seemed to be, I have invariably had immediate reason to regret and abhor the very sight of him; and although, as witnessed by yourself to-day, I could not actually prove any premeditated evil in this instance, yet I believe him to be, and instinctively shrink from him, as malicious and wicked a little monster as ever trod this earth.

“His name, you ask? His name is *Gorles*!” Lambard quite yelled in answer to my simple and very natural inquiry. And then there rushed forth a volley of ugly words and sentiments, in a tone which caused a poor husbandman to start with astonishment, just as he had put his head over the hedge to respectfully ask if he could tell him what horse had won the Derby.

Blank dismay was depicted on that honest rustic’s countenance as, civilly touching his forelock, he replied, “Oh, Gorles, was it? Thank’ye, gentleman.

I don't think I'd ever heard tell of that name, though, as a favour—ite!" And by his expression of face, I could see that he evidently thought that one of us must have stood heavily against the said strangely-named but fortunate winner.

At any other time how old Lambard would have laughed at and enjoyed the poor fellow's mistake! but he was just then too much preoccupied with anathematizing his enemy, and then went on to answer the continuation of my inquiry.

"How long have I known him? Ever since I first went up to Eton. That was the last Montem year, which was, I think, two or three years before you came up there. Strapper as I am now, I was a very little fellow, small of my age, and was at first placed far down in the lower part of the school; and Gorles, strange as it seems to look back to, was the head boy, or captain, as we used to call them, you remember, of my tutor's house, and was then what seemed to me ever so much bigger than myself. I remember considering him quite 'a big fellow'—fancy!

"I had not been at the school above two or three weeks, when having been ordered up one morning with half-a-dozen other lower boys to breakfast-fagging at the captain's mess, Gorles, who had never yet exchanged

a single word with me, or, as might have been supposed, ever even noticed my existence, walked round to where I was standing, and bringing his odious face close down to mine, with that same satanic grin which you may have observed to-day, and which I have never had out of my mind from that day to this, deliberately took aim with his clenched fist, measured his distance, and then, without the slightest cause or provocation, struck me with all his might on the spot covered by about the third button of my waist-coat.

“By all the pepper of the Lambards! this was more than I could stand. Like a young tiger cat, I was at him in an instant, and I felt my little fist go smash into his grinning face with all my power, such as it was,—childish, of course,—but with all the goodwill that fury and indignation could lend to it.

“You, who remember the strict rules of public school discipline, and how utterly unheard of such an atrocity as a fag—a new lower boy—daring to raise his fist against a Fifth-form is, and ought to be—can appreciate the astonishment and consternation of my surrounding fellow-fags, not perhaps unmixed with suppressed delight.

“Though probably such feelings on their part were as nothing compared with those of the cowardly little

bully himself, who could never have dreamt of such quick returns to his unprovoked assault.

“But I gave him no time to think, for in at him I went ‘hammer and tongs;’ and so, with right on my side, I called to mind and felt I was acting up to the last words of advice my poor dear old father had given me, when shaking me by the hand as he left me at the door,

“‘Never tell a lie, my boy!’ he said; ‘never tell tales of your school-fellows, and never take a blow from any of them, great or small, without returning it, if given for nothing!’

“And although this last did not, it is true, quite answer in this instance, I think, as a general rule, it was good counsel, founded on a sound knowledge of human nature.

“‘Depend upon it none but a rank coward at heart will ever strike a little fellow for nothing; and if you stick up to him (my father had himself been at Eton, and kept many of his old school expressions through life), ‘ten to one he will leave you alone for the future, even if you get the worst of it for the time. You can but have a licking after all, while you have given back at least something in return; and one good fight against odds will save you from scores of bullyings, if not lickings, which, I dare say, you will deserve!’

“And so as this idea flashed through my mind, at him I went; and when he tumbled backwards over his breakfast-table, amidst a smash of crockery, as he did,—more, I suppose, from surprise than under the actual force of my sudden attack,—I flung a sausage-dish at his head; and it was well for him that it smashed against the opposite wall instead of its intended object.

“But short was my triumph, for he was up again directly, and springing at me, we closed and tumbled over together; when, although I kicked away at his shins as hard and as long as I could, yet having got me under him and sitting astride my chest, he seized me by my ears and was pounding my poor little head against the floor, till I really believe he would have killed me, if Mary Anne, the boys’-maid, had not rushed in and rescued me, but not before I was all but senseless: and so for nearly three days I lay in my turn-down bed, queer and delirious.

“Indeed I believe it was even longer than that time before I could appreciate the visits and levées of friendly lower boys to my room, and understand entirely their reports of how Gorles had been sent up to the Doctor, and though he had escaped a flogging, had been turned down into the lower division for the rest of the half.

“That he had also been mobbed and publicly hooted in the school-yard; which led to further and confusing discussions whether with such demonstrations of public sympathy towards myself, I should still have to undergo, ‘a college hiding’ in long chamber for hitting an upper boy; to which awful penalty I had no doubt rendered myself in strict law liable; but, under the circumstances, whether it would be carried out? And then followed other wonderings and serious topics which are wont to obfuscate the lucid brains of each succeeding generation of small boys while still in a fourth-form state of development.

“The fact is, that when I recovered and was ‘in school’ again I found myself, if not quite a hero, at least famous, and the object of a ‘sensation’ as they call it now-a-days.

“And so far let me here mention that I found the parental advice proved right after all; for in the whole course of my time at Eton, which was, I should say, as happy and jolly a one as perhaps any one of the many thousands who have been through the same, I never once, I think, received a gratuitous licking, or had occasion for another fight, from that day, until of course my mill on the Brocas, just before I left, with the Badger.

“ But now to return to Gorles, and what I was going to tell you.

“ On the second or third night, as I lay still confused and but half sensible from the effect of the pounding my poor little head had received—they have always tried to persuade me that it was a dream and delusion—but I know better, and as true as I am here in this dusty road telling you, so am I sure and ready to swear that what I now relate to you is a positive fact and no delusion.

“ I will allow that I had been asleep for some little time before, but was quite wide awake—broad awake—and distinctly heard the college-clock chime the four quarters, and then strike one—two—three, when I became conscious of a heavy pressure on my chest; and, how he came there I cannot say, but there was Gorles, partly dressed, astride as he had sat on me when he banged my head, and his mouth was close down to mine, as I lay there helpless on my back; and he was either breathing into, or, as my impression was then, and still is, himself inhaling my breath with great deep sucks.

“ Our eyes met: there was a dim light burning in the room, and for what, certainly as I look back seems an interval of some minutes, there he was and con-

tinued his operation, while I could feel my heart, thump, thump, thumping, like the pendulum of a great church clock.

“As to the exact duration of time, I may be under a delusion ; but as to the fact I am so certain and positive, that I would swear to it with my last breath.

“I was powerless. I tried to struggle, and did my best to cry out, but without avail, as one feels in a nightmare—and yet that was no nightmare or sleeping imagination—it was fact.

“It was Gorles who himself broke the silence first, as he again seemed to inhale with special force at my heavy breathing, for he muttered to himself as it were, “There is real Spirit here, and it shall serve me through life.”

“Then it was that, with a redoubled strain, I found utterance for my voice, and with a loud cry of agony roused the whole house.

“It seemed in less than an instant that my room was full of boys in their night-shirts, some looking frightened out of their wits, some laughing while their teeth were chattering with cold, others angry and beginning to abuse me for disturbing them from their warm beds : and a comical figure old Mary Anne the boys'-maid looked, wrapped tight up in her counterpane like a mummy, though I was then, heaven

knows, in no state much to appreciate the absurdity of her appearance.

“I was nearly wild with terror, and Mary Anne, who, as you may remember, was apt to be sharp and handy enough with her tongue as a regular rule, was quite gentle with me; and when she had cleared the room, and driven all the other fellows back to their beds, she tried to soothe and comfort me almost as if I had been a baby in arms.

“No one would listen to my account of what really had made me cry out; no one would believe a word of it. All declared that Gorles had never been to my room; indeed, was the only one in the house who had not joined the rush to see what was the row. One or two at first had so far corroborated my statement as to agree that they thought they had heard the noise of some person running by, and the slam of a door at the end of his passage.

“But when, after a parley as to the propriety of invading the Captain’s room at such an hour and on such an unlikely charge, some of the elder fellows did go in to satisfy themselves, Gorles was in bed, and fast asleep.

“That is, of course, shamming to be so, the only soul in the house who had been entirely undisturbed by my shriek. I was very ill, indeed, after that night;

delirious, I believe, at times, and by night and day haunted by visions of my tormentor.

“I shudder even now to look back upon the rage and misery it used to put me into when I found that no one would listen for a moment, firmly and unchangeably as I stuck to my account of the visitation and unhallowed operation I had undergone from that abominable little vampire.

“Gorles himself, when told of my accusation against him, never would deny it, though he, of course, never admitted it ; but, always grinning with an evil expression of malice, seemed rather to vaunt himself and be rather pleased than not at the horrible idea.

“I could not myself understand or attempt to define, but with all my soul I dreaded the spiritual power which I intuitively felt that Gorles had gained over me. For hours together, long after I had recovered and was all right again, I used to brood over and wonder in what shape I should begin to be actually conscious of his influence ; but it steadily grew and increased upon me.”

CHAPTER III.

ETON REMINISCENCES.

“AFTER my recovery I was appointed fag to another fifth-form master, and he was kind enough to me, requiring nothing more than the ordinary duties at his breakfast and tea times, and dispensing even with my constant attendance on those occasions, as long as I and the other two who were with me could arrange among ourselves or with the maids that everything should be on his table, right and ready for him, as he required it.

“So with that great gulf between us which exists at Eton between an upper and a fourth-form boy, there was no reason there should ever have been any further communication between Gorles and myself.

“We never exchanged a word or were even in the same room together, except at dinner or supper, and on those occasions there was the whole length of a long table between our places; yet I somehow always felt and knew that he was constantly watching me.

He evidently was aware of and enjoyed the horror and terror he inspired. Without knowing the cause, I have again and again suddenly felt a cold shiver come over me, and, on looking round, have caught the glance of his sinister grey eyes, as he would turn from me with a Satanical grin ; and resist it as I often tried and determined to do, and although, as I have just said, we next to never exchanged a word, I have felt myself compelled involuntarily to follow him, ay, even on occasions to fag for him, in such a way, for instance, as in securing a five's wall after chapel, which he has immediately come upon, and by superior right taken from me ; carrying a wrong bat down to the playing fields by mistake for some other fellow's, and then find that Gorles had just been wishing for it ; and so on many other like occasions, accidentally, as it were, serving him without his ever having had the trouble even of sending me, or telling me his wants.

“ On more than one occasion, incredible as it must seem, and though I was never, as a child, before that time, addicted to somnambulism, I have awakened suddenly, finding that I had in my sleep actually walked into Gorles's room, at three or four o'clock in the morning, having only recovered myself in time to escape, as I have thought, before he should recognise

me : and afterwards heard that he has casually stated that if he had not accidentally been roused at some particularly early hour he should never have got through his verses or other school work which he had left to the chance of waking early enough in the morning to finish. Specially antipathic as he and I were, if I may say so with this strange unaccountable *support* thus existing between us, Gorles was generally disliked by all the rest of my tutor's fellows.

“ All had a kind of dread and seemed afraid of personally offending him. Among the upper boys of his own standing he had no real friends, and but little association. While as to the lower boys, he bullied, fagged them about right and left, and licked all those he could without mercy. As I myself in the course of time worked my way up to the higher forms in the school, and out of the regions of fagging, I always kept entirely aloof from him, except sometimes when I could not help interfering on behalf of some little wretch whom he was more than ordinarily tormenting.

“ But for that I was sure to pay the penalty, somehow or other ; for the mysterious influence was always over me, and I may safely say that of all the hundreds of scrapes I was in, and in every single row, I could always trace the immediate cause to Gorles,

more or less, though very often quite apparently indirectly, and as if by mere accidental coincidence.

“Twice, as you may have heard, I was as near as possible drowned ; the first time I was learning to scull, before I could swim—‘passing’ was not instituted in those days, you know, before that poor fellow was run down by the bargeman ; my boat was all of a sudden caught and capsized by the rope of an empty punt, left swinging to an osier stump by Gorles, who had gone to bathe further up the river. Again, after that, when I had acquired that necessary art, I was suddenly seized with the cramp while swimming at the weir, and fished up insensible, not apparently worth picking out—as near a shave that time as anything, except an unowned cat, ever lived through to look back upon.

“It is true I had no business to be at that place at all, but there would have been no danger if the proper waterman had been at his post ; but I am hanged if it was not Gorles again who had called him away to hunt for crayfish, out of sight and ear-shot till almost too late.

“As soon as I was well again, I was complained of and flogged for bathing where I had no right to go ; not, as the Doctor explained to my remonstrances, for having the cramp, but for an example.

“Nor was that the only time by many, more often than I can now count up, that I caught it through Gorles, but without exception always somehow or other connected with him.

“Then, one race-week, when a lot of us ran right against my tutor as we were coming out of the theatre, all bolted and escaped except myself, who, rushing up a passage tumbled clean over something, which at the moment came bowling out against me, and so I was nailed. I at first fancied it was a big dog, and began to look out for my legs; but when I had picked myself up, what should it be sprawling under me, and crushed out of all shape, but my ‘*bête noire*,’ positively spitting with rage; though as I got another rattling switching, I thought I was the most aggrieved in the collision of the two.

“Accused through him of talking in chapel, both times unjustly,—I was merely asking some question about the anthem, or what the day of the month was for the psalms,—as bad luck would have it, Billy Carter, who was the Master ‘in Desk,’ had his eye right on me, attracted by a demoniacal noise like an engine signal: Gorles again, who sat on the high seats behind me, blowing that abominable turn-up nose of his! And another time dropping his book with a bang, and so bringing the atten-

tion of the whole chapel upon our quarter just exactly at the only moment I happened to open my lips.

“It was always the same; so that I had quite come to regard it as my destiny, and to make up my mind to bear it philosophically.

“Even after he had left Eton—you were fresh up at that time, you know, Little one, but may perhaps remember how Snaffles and I caught it so again, and were as near as possible expelled for driving the ‘bus’ from Slough to Fifteen-arch Bridge, when we had the misfortune to upset it.

“When the passengers, who were so absurdly indignant, because we raced the rival ‘bus,’ and so in our anxiety ran bang into the ditch, were all bundling out from behind, I really could hardly believe my own eyes when out came Gorles, if you please, whom I had never noticed get in.

“What on earth he could have come down for, I cannot think, as I am quite sure he had left no friends behind who would have cared to see his ugly little face again.

“And how any of the fellows ever could have thought of allowing him to be a sitter to a boat on the 4th of June, I cannot imagine; but they did. I was then rowing six in the ‘Thetis,’ and, to my disgust, just as we were starting, who should I see but himself

squatting up like an ape, in the stern of our boat, his little eyes twinkling with malice, as he wagged his head at me, and asked if it was not an unexpected pleasure to see him there ?

“ It was too late for me to get out of it, which was my first idea ; but I knew we should come to some grief : and so we did.

“ My oar snapped short off, for no manner of apparent reason, as we were going into the locks ; and at night, the second time we were going down, ‘ hard all,’ among a blaze of fireworks, we ran plump on to Windsor Bridge, smashing our boat all to smithereens, and so had to swim for it in all our fine uniforms and toggery : and in consequence of the howling, shouting, and terrible bad language (which was entirely our sitter, who was as drunk as Bacchus), all as bad luck, or rather I should say, Gorles’ malign influence, would have it, taking place close under where the present Head Master, with a large party of ladies, had secured an excellent place for the show, the whole boat’s crew were next morning sent up, and severely dealt with as having been guilty of most unseemly language, and of gross intoxication on that festive occasion.

“ A nice bill we had to pay amongst us for the smashed boat into the bargain, to which Master Gorles

who, our coxswain always swore, had in his drunken frenzy pulled the rudder lines out of his hand, and steered right on to the bridge wilfully, when applied to for a subscription, entirely declined even noticing the respectful invitation. That incident, however, had the beneficial effect of preventing a recurrence of his visits to Eton or its neighbourhood, at least while I remained there, and I fancy ever since.

“Bless you, I could go on to fill whole encyclopædias with the wrongs he has occasioned me.

“Did not his evil eye kill my favourite terrier? or, as I shall always believe, he poisoned it; any how, he saw it one day at Fisher’s yard and wanted to buy it; he said nothing when he was told that it was not for sale, but was my property. The dog was perfectly well that afternoon, but sickened and died that very night!

CHAPTER IV.

QUID QUID ID EST TIMEO DANAOS ET DONA
FERENTES.

“BUT before he left, there was one special occurrence which, though I left it out of its proper place, I may as well tell you, for of course as it was only just before you yourself came up, you may have heard some of the sensation and row it made in my tutor’s house. I can hardly even now bear to think of, or mention it; it makes my blood tingle to remember that for a single moment, false as it proved, such a suspicion should ever have been connected with my name. But if that ‘plant’ had succeeded, as it was intended to do, in branding me with the character of ‘a Thief,’ I should have just blown my own brains out—I mean: (he, as it were, almost jerked out, as if, for very shame at such an idea, it still stuck hard in his throat), I mean, about that five-pound note that young Ordwell lost.

And in that most flagrant instance of all, though I have told you that it was indirectly, and as if acciden-

tally, that Gorles exerted his strange influence against me, the more I think of it, the more I shall always believe that that was as infernal a plot as ever was concocted by one fellow to ruin another in this world.

The fact is, I was at that time awfully hard up for money :—I always was, you know, some how or other ; it was, you might say, my normal condition so to be : my means, though I must in justice to my parents acknowledge, rather above than below the average, were in no sort of way proportionate to my wants. I had asked two or three of my more intimate friends if they could lend me a few pounds. I knew they would have done so if they could, but they were quite as badly off as myself.

It happened to be just the time that I was crazy to be elected stroke of the “ Victory,” the very height of my ambition ; but I had received a hint that I must pay up my subscription and arrears at once, or the oar would be given over to some one else. Gorles knew all this ; how, I don’t exactly know, except that he always intuitively had a perfect acquaintance with all about me, and all my concerns, avoid him as I made a point of doing.

Now some two or three weeks before the time I speak of, there had been some ugly rumours at my tutor’s about money missing. Little Ordwell had lost

a five-pound note out of his bureau. This, of course, caused a miserably uncomfortable feeling through the house. We had, for our public character's sake, kept it hushed up as much as possible ; and, nothing having turned up to throw suspicion on any one individual more than another, no one had taken upon himself to mention the matter to the authorities.

Young Ordwell himself, who owned to having saved it up, out of what he had brought back with him, and his weekly allowance, and having just before he lost it changed his savings from coin into paper, received more than one kick and licking, for presuming to have so much to lose, at the end of the half as it was, instead of having spent it like a gentleman ; indeed, some boys chose to doubt and disbelieve the fact as improbable, amounting almost to an impossibility.

Well, as I say, this had occurred, and naturally tended to throw a cloud over us all. Some little time before my dilemma about my boat subscription I was regularly down in the mouth ; and having passed a wretched night, at the prospect of losing the much-coveted oar, and the position it would have given me in the school, as well as at my own tutor's, I had just come out from eight o'clock school with the usual "write out and translate" injunction for not having known a single word of my "long Horace," when, on

entering my own room, I found two letters on my table.

One, I saw at a glance, was from home, which in consequence of my last communication from that quarter, I am now ashamed to say, I did not somehow feel in any very particular hurry to open; that was, I suppose, the reason of my tearing the other envelope first without looking or thinking about where it may have come from. But what do you think were my feelings when there fell out a five-pound note, crisp and clean?—folded in a sheet of note paper, on which was written in a strange hand:—

“This from a friend, who knows how much you want it, who will declare himself when you can pay, as he knows you will: pay up your dues to the boat, and ask no questions; only on your honour, as a gentleman, you must feel bound to mention this to nobody, but promise to burn the letter and envelope immediately when read.”

Signed “N. M.”

Who on earth N. M. could be I could not imagine, except the party in the Catechism; but, whoever he was, what a real trump! and what a real Godsend this at first sight seemed to be.

Such were my first feelings of wonder, mixed with

those of relief and gratitude. The condition was easily complied with, by throwing the letter behind the fire without a second thought.

In another minute I was rushing off, forthwith to pay up and settle all claims upon me, when, as I flung out of my door, I tumbled right over Gorles, who seemed very much taken aback, as well he might be, for he was in the very act of leaning forward, as if he had been thinking of peeping through my key-hole, though, by my sudden rush, arrested in the accomplishment of his desire.

He muttered something indistinctly, whether of abuse or apology I could hardly say ; but something about wishing only to know whether I had received my letters safely ; which, considering the terms we were always on, struck me as being somewhat impertinent.

But it was not until, having bowled down stairs, three steps at a time, I had arrived at the bottom, that the sudden thought flashed through my mind that there had been something about my evil genius's expression, even more than usual, peculiarly sinister, which thought made me pull up in my impetuosity to have a think ; and to assist that mental operation, I naturally plunged my hands into the depths of my breeches-pockets.

My thoughts were so decidedly unpleasant, that it

was quite a relief to find the other letter, which had been driven out of my mind, but which I now opened as I walked along more slowly.

Well! if I never thought much about a special Providence before that time, I did so then, and have often since felt grateful for the same! A cheque from my dear mother for five pounds, which she said she could well afford from her private purse, was there enclosed with eight closely crossed sides of prayers and hopes, and gentle lecture about extravagance, and so on.

I had, you see, written to my father in despair, for I had, I must confess, been rather "going it" that half, and had from him two days before received a similar effusion, only of a more masculine character, and omitting the accompanying *mollifier*, which he had begged entirely to decline, and that was, you see, what had caused me to be so specially out of sorts about the business.

Well, thus reinforced in means as well as spirits, that passing trouble was not very long about being satisfactorily settled, and with the mysterious fiver still unchanged in my pocket, I returned to my breakfast, revolving many queer thoughts and suspicions in my mind; thoughts which, I think, physiologically speaking, must have somewhat interfered with the

proper digestion of that meal, which was no sooner hastily despatched, than quite forgetting, or rather as I did not now mean to avail myself of it, not feeling bound by its accompanying conditions, I went off to Old Wysore's room—Socrates, don't you remember, we used to call him?—and a good name too, for he was as full of knowledge and sound sense as that, or any other philosopher you would like to name.

Though, of course, such a regular old sap as he was, and myself, were not exactly companions, or much thrown together in our ways and amusements, yet we were always fast friends, and I believe few fellows mutually liked each other more than we did, as total opposites often do.

When I went up to his room he had just finished devouring his morning's allowance of jam. Those reading fellows always do devour such a lot of jam and marmalade, and he was, I well remember, for it struck me so particularly, turning "Old Mother Hubbard" into Greek iambs. For fun! he told me. Fancy any one seeing any fun in such an awful idea!

He listened patiently while I told him all my story, and showed him the bank-note I had received. I was quite furious with myself for having been such an idiot as to burn the letter and cover in which it had come. I omitted no details, even to the tumbling

over Gorles, as I was rushing out of my own door, and the extraordinary good luck by which legitimate means had so opportunely turned up by the very same post, and so saved me from paying away the note, which I certainly should otherwise have done.

I do not think I set forth in so many words all the suspicions that had occurred to me, but naturally I wound up with an extra stress on how something peculiar in Gorles' manner and look had made me glad—I could not say how glad—that I had not in my haste made use of the mysterious gift.

“Rum,” slowly and oracularly pronounced Socrates, when he had heard my narrative all through to the end, and then he made a quotation, which I dare say you would know if I could only say it right; something about finking the Danes, when they are ‘*dona ferentes*!’ anyhow, it was very appropriate, and he wound it up by declaring it again to be most decidedly rum. “But,” continued he, “being, as I am, aware of your inveterate prejudice and feeling against that particular party, I should not, perhaps, think it so very rum as I do, if it did not happen to coincide in a very remarkable manner with a very remarkable speech made by Gorles the other morning, from which, connected with what you now tell me, it requires no great stretch of imagination to fancy that he may have had some

such idea in his head ; still, I could scarcely have thought that any fellow could have ever had the fiend-like malice in him to have gone such lengths for the sake of revenge ; but, as I say, it certainly is a strange coincidence that, some days ago, Gorles was abusing and inveighing most bitterly against you, for interfering between himself and some small boy he had been bullying ; and he then declared, before a lot of us who were standing round, that he hated you to that degree that he was determined to make the house too hot to hold you, and that he would willingly give five or even ten pounds to do so. It was a rum idea, which I remarked particularly, because Jemmy Ryler, who was there, said he thought my tutor would expect more than that, if his intention was to offer to bribe him to expel you ; and went on to ask him whether he fancied he was in Italy or Spain, and intended hiring a bravo to stick you through the back with a stiletto ; and so they were going on chaffing him."

"And, to tell you the truth, he certainly has more than once, not in so many words exactly, seemed to insinuate and make sort of indirect inuendos against yourself in regard to young Ordwell's money.

"There, don't flare up!" old Wysore said, complacently, as he saw me naturally bristling up at

this announcement. "No single fellow would, for an instant, allow the idea; which Gorles had, as I tell you, barely suggested before he was regularly groaned down; but, be calm, and let us call in two or three of the leading fellows of the house as witnesses, for, "in the multitude of councillors, is there not wisdom?"—and then I should advise, if they, when they have heard the whole case, agree in thinking of it as I do that you should go boldly to my tutor and lay the whole matter before him."

So Ryler, Maine, and Sandy Kannietry were summoned to a solemn consultation, and their general verdict was fully in accordance with the sound advice of Socrates.

Except Sandy, who, though he said he quite agreed with the rest, would continue to desire us to 'Bide a wee, bide a wee; ye may, ye know, have grave suspicions which are no facts: so just bide a wee, while I will keep my weather-eye open, and maybe proofs will crop out.' But as it turned out, it was truly lucky that I had thus at once consulted those fellows, and so established them as witnesses to back me, and prove that it was my own wish and intention of at once inviting investigation on the subject.

That very same day, after dinner, my tutor called us all back to stay, and, with evidently deep feeling and

distress of mind, inquired if any boy had, during the half, lost any money, or if we had heard of any unpleasant rumours of money having been missing in his house, for,—he went on to say, and I suppose it was my consciousness, not I mean of guilt, but of the shame of knowing that I had been indirectly hinted at, that made me feel his eyes resting particularly on myself—averse as he now felt, and as every one of course would feel, to take notice of any anonymous accusations; yet, in regard to so serious a charge, which affected even himself, as well as all who were under his roof, he wished to inquire first, as to the fact of money having thus been lost, and if so, had there arisen any reason to attach suspicion to any particular individual. He was only too grieved to say, that a letter he had received by post that morning tended to convey to him that there was one amongst us (here he looked very hard at myself) who could be satisfactorily proved to have been unable to pay his boat subscription over night, and somehow to have found means to do so in the morning. And then, suddenly turning upon me in a sharp tone, he asked: “Lambard, have you anything to say, or explanation to give, in this matter?”

My blood was, as you may suppose, well up; so, feeling that I had the game on my side, I spoke out

pretty plainly, without taking much thought as to either my manners or my words. "In the first place, Sir," I asked, "does this anonymous letter you allude to dare to mention me by name? if not, by what right do you try to turn these suspicions so immediately and specially against me, more than any other boy in the house? and then may I beg leave to examine carefully the handwriting of the said letter, to see how far it will agree with one I myself received by the earlier post, but have like a fool destroyed; and thirdly, was the number of the note lost by Ordwell, 79264? for if so, here it is."

And with what must have appeared to those who had not been behind the scenes, the most astounding effrontery (for all the house knew how "hard up" I had been only the day before), I produced the above numbered note from my pocket and laid it upon the table.

"And now, Sir," I continued, "in regard to that same anonymous letter, on the strength of which you have so publicly, I might almost venture to say, so unjustly, thought fit to throw upon me the suspicion of this disgrace, allow me respectfully to say that I think the call rests with me; and as publicly I beg leave to express my suspicion, and firm conviction, that the author of that accusation, as well as of the trap

laid for me this morning, is no other than the person now standing at your own right hand. Look at him," I cried, turning round, "look at him, how he winces before my accusation, all of you fellows, and say which of us looks most like a thief and a cowardly villain: myself or that fellow Gorles!——"

The little wretch was perfectly livid, and seemed crumpled up into half his even natural dwarfish size. He stammered out something about not standing there to be thus insulted, and rushed out of the room, followed by almost the whole concourse in one universal groan and hoot of shame.

When Ordwell was called back and examined as to the number of the note which he had lost, the young muff had no idea whether the number was 79264, (how well I remember the order of those figures to this day) or not: he had never noticed, he said; so the perfect *dénouement* of the domestic drama failed, you see, to turn out as artistically as it ought to have done.

As to the mysterious note, as, of course, Gorles, having had time to recover his self-possession, utterly denied any knowledge and claim to it, it was unanimously voted to be given over to Ordwell in the place of the one he had lost; but with a public and strict injunction to spend it like a gentleman, and not dare to bottle it as he had done.

Out of that loop-hole, my tutor, who, though a good fellow in the main, I shall always think, in that affair, behaved most weakly and unjustly, was too happy, of course, to escape from the scandal of bringing home so atrocious a piece of villany to the head boy of his own house.

He also laid great stress on the fact of the handwriting of the anonymous letter not being that of Gorles. As to that, it was like no one's, being evidently disguised and unnatural, but, as I could swear, precisely the same as that which I had received, and so unfortunately destroyed in compliance with the strict injunction, for which I now, though too late, saw the reason.

But wasn't it lucky now, that by consulting those other fellows immediately, I was thus saved? for you see that if I had kept it to myself for only half a day, I must have been irrevocably done for.

It riled me not a little that, convinced as I was, am, and ever shall be, of Gorles' guilt, we could bring no actual proof or evidence for conviction home to him.

And that point, as I say, my tutor perceived and held on to; for after the abrupt departure of the little brute, as I have described, with the whole ruck halloaing at his heels, we, that is Wysore and the other three

and myself, had stayed behind to tell my story plainly and quietly.

It is fair to say that my tutor in those fellows' presence tendered me an ample apology, shaking me condescendingly by the hand.

But when I went on to lay before him my own strong convictions, and equally strong grounds for them, founded upon the unwarrantable threats to which these others could bear witness, he immediately turned upon me with a burst of got-up indignation.

"Lambard," he said, quite fiercely, "you know that original prejudice and illusion have now for more than three years existed and become a species of monomania with you : on that point you really are not quite"—and he hesitated (though I suppose he was going to say sane) ; "and I cannot for a moment listen to you ; but I am only too glad that you have thus satisfactorily cleared yourself of this unpleasant suspicion, without the least," so he was pleased to say, "implicating any one else."

So, pig-headed, as you know he could be if he liked, he let the matter drop, I believe congratulating himself on so easily seeing his way out of an ugly business. That was the half, you know, Gorles was leaving, and though for the remainder of his time the majority of our house were more shy of him than ever,

yet, what with my tutor's example of wilfully blinding himself to such clear, though circumstantial evidence, and to Kannietry's reiterated nonsense of its being a case of "Not proven," there were a good many fellows who chose to disbelieve, or at least to say that they doubted his guilt in this matter.

So far, on the pure motive of judging others from themselves, perhaps after all those were not to blame who stuck to the charitable opinion that, disagreeable and generally odious as he was acknowledged to be, no fellow could really be so diabolically wicked as thus deliberately to try to ruin a school-fellow's character and whole look-out for life.

But then I say to that, that Gorles was not to be judged by the ordinary rules of human nature; imp of evil, and positively and actually possessed as he is by a devil, as you should hear, if I only had time to tell you all that I have subsequently known and suffered from his supernatural and diabolical acts.

Ugly big words, you say, and I see you opening the eyes of astonishment, but I do not mean one jot less than I say, *supernatural* and *diabolical*.

Wait till you have heard all, for you must not imagine that my feelings of detestation, and, I will not deny, dread of that little fiend incarnate, are only founded on what I have now been telling you, about

our old school-days. Why, as far as that goes, many of those schoolboy adventures and reminiscences, though true every one of them, and more or less connected with Gorles, had clean gone out of my head for years past ; but I suppose seeing once more your old familiar phiz, my dear fellow, brought back old Eton and those scenes uppermost, as well as dozens of others not worth telling, which might as well be forgotten, except, of course, that rascally trick against me, which I have just kept to the last, but which if I lived to a hundred I should never forget, and yet all I have been telling you is merely a preface or introduction to what is to come.

But, see, we have no time for more, for here we are at the Kingston Station, and, by Jove, there goes the signal for the up-train. We must make a rush for it. I feel cooler now, morally I mean, if not physically. My walk and talk with you have done me good, and have let off some of the steam ; so for the present I will try to dismiss this fit of the dyspepsia and be myself again. I think I could even be jolly, if we are only lucky enough to find some good party to chaff on our way up, and have some fun with. I feel I shall be all right again by the time we get to town."

CHAPTER V.

UNEXPECTED RECOGNITIONS.

By the time we were settled in our places, and had had our first look round at the other occupants of the railway compartment into which the guard had thrust us, as the train was actually on the move, Lambard really seemed to have recovered himself, and to be ready for indulging his previously announced humour for chaffing any fair object for such sport with whom we might chance to fall in.

The further opposite corner was occupied by a stout lady, evidently of quality, rather past the middle age, I should say, though still fat, fair, and very blooming. "Blooming" was just what she was all over. Magnificent flowers, intermingled with clusters of fruit, bloomed in her bonnet, inside and out, while rich and bright coloured representatives of every variety of (I should say) a tropical vegetation meandered in a striking though pleasing confusion over the ample breadths of her rich silk dress.

I felt sure, as I looked at her in respectful admiration, that in her own immediate circle, and towards all her fellow creatures who had ever had the privilege of being properly introduced to that grand lady, she probably was a very model of radiant geniality and beaming good nature; but upon us unfortunate strangers of another and an outer world her looks were, I must confess, stern and anything but amiable.

She seemed amazed at our impertinence in venturing to intrude ourselves into that carriage, and thus deranging her many shawls, air-cushions, hand-bags, and other paraphernalia with which the seats opposite and beside her were profusely covered. I could not help thinking, with a feeling of awe, of Lambard's proposed "chaff" as I caught that vacant blue eye; deigning for an instant to take a view of us over the top of the *Morning Post*, which was held up as a sort of screen against the common world, thus displaying, though not that I mean with the slightest idea of any vulgar ostentation, a round arm loaded with quite a collection of cables, shackles, chains, lockets, bangles, and a general miscellany of gimcracks which might have gone far towards stocking a respectable Bond-street shop window.

There was a something in that eye which, letting alone natural good breeding, should have at once

settled any question of "chaff" with the most audacious and reckless of mortals.

But as I glanced round at Lambard, I saw that he was not even looking at her.

He was staring with both his eyes open at their widest at his *vis-à-vis*, who was either the humble companion, or rather stuck-up maid of the grand lady, I could not quite make up my mind which.

She had a bonnet even more brilliant and variegated in its many colours than that of her superior, stuck on the top of a cluster of little corkscrew curls, which hung down over her forehead and cheeks.

If the extreme tip of her rather sharp nose had not been of the same bright carmine tint as those cheeks, I should, I think, have been uncharitable enough to have decided in my own mind that she certainly rouged.

Lambard sat staring at her in so marked a manner that the old lady was perhaps not altogether without some just grounds for her manifest indignation.

"Ursulina," she said, in a very dry voice, "you had better come over here opposite to me; never mind my inconvenience, I think you will be more comfortable. So, in spite of all protest on her part, Ursulina had to move across, and squeeze herself, by

way of being more comfortable, into as much space as was left by a tolerably-sized dressing-case, a pair of goloshes, and other *et ceteras*, in the seat to which she was directed. It struck me, that though Lambard's manner had been remarkable, not to say rude, she personally had no objection to his decided attention, for as she passed me I heard her utter, in soft accents, to herself—

“Well! Did I ever? Does he know me?”

My companion, roused from his stare by the movement, began to scratch his ear, evidently in deep consideration, from which process, however, by the expression of his face, he had not arrived at any very satisfactory result, when, happening to look up into the face of the only remaining occupant of our carriage, he gave vent to a sort of exclamation of surprise, as if in him also he had recognised an acquaintance, and then checked himself.

This third person was a very freckle-faced young gentleman, arrayed in an exceedingly loud check suit, with a gorgeous shirt-front, in which glittered a set of studs in the shape of enamelled green beetles, nearly the size of life.

He was so good as to commence conversation by informing us that it was the Derby-Day, and that just at that exact moment, as indicated by an absurdity

of a small watch, of which he was evidently immensely proud, and which he kept dangling on his finger, that that exciting event was taking place at Epsom.

He went on to tell us how much he regretted having been prevented by important, I am not quite sure he did not say political, business from having honoured the Course by his own presence, for that he, or at least a most particular friend and connexion of his—correcting himself as he happened to catch the old lady's glance—a most particular friend of his had many thousands depending on the race.

We had not felt quite sure whether this pleasing specimen of the rising generation belonged to the grand old dame or not; but when he went further to give us to understand that he himself was, or at least on some contingency depending on some other particular friend, that he probably might be the owner of two if not three of the best favourites for the next year, it was more than she could stand; and with majestic and overwhelming indignation did she speak out.—

“Oh, Ferdinand, can this be so?”

“How long have you entered upon this road to ruin?”

“Little does your dear papa imagine, I am sure, that his only son is an abandoned better and gambler;

but know it he shall, for I will write to him this very night, you may rely upon it."

"You are quite right, ma'am; nothing can be possibly worse than a better," rejoined Lambard with a most respectful bow, as he ventured on that atrocious pun, which I suppose he found irresistible.

"Sir, I am not in the habit of entering into conversation with unknown strangers," was her stately reply.

Ferdinand, thus solemnly adjured, did not seem to make much of his grandmamma's—or whatever she really was to him—remarks or threats.

Indeed I am afraid he only laughed, and bade her mind her own business.

Lambard went on drawing him out to any extent, pretending to be glad of such an opportunity for deriving so much and such valuable information on the subject of horses, training-stables, jockeys, handicaps, and other turf matters, over and over again appealing to me, whether it was not great luck to have fallen in with so excellent a guide on sporting matters, and evidently so much enjoying the idea, that he appeared, as he had said he would, to have driven all his own troubles and late violent feelings clean away.

Indeed, when reminded of them by the ticket-collector, who, upon opening our carriage at Vauxhall, civilly touched his cap with the information that

"Caractacus" had won the Derby, it was only with something between a grunt and a sigh that he replied, "Thank ye kindly, all the same, but we could have told you that three hours ago, we saw it run," to the no small surprise and confusion of the young turfite in the green beetles, who, encouraged as he had been, had the very moment before been offering, in so many words, to put us up to a specially good thing or two.

"Never mind, Ferdy, my boy," cried out my companion, to my no small consternation at his rudeness, as with a loud laugh he jumped out of the carriage. "You seem quite to have forgotten me, though I remembered you. It was only a case of instructing your cousin instead of your grandmother, in the sublime art of sucking eggs, you know. Don't you know me now?"

The bumptious youth stared hard, and then as a recollection of Lambard's identity seemed to dawn upon him, became as red as a turkey-cock, and stammered out some mild expressions of delight at the unexpected recognition.

"Never mind, old fellow," cried Frank, with a hearty slap on the back; "I'm glad to see you. How's your father, the old colonel? Give my remembrances to him."

"I say, Ferdy!" he ran back after we had moved some way down the platform, as if struck with some

sudden motive ; “ I say, Ferdy, who was that old girl with you—not your new stepmother, the Blobb, is it ? ”

“ Yes, the very same—the Blobb—confound her ! ” answered Ferdy, very sulkily, as he stood there still gaping like a stuffed pig.

“ And is the other her old maid, Madam Croskanski, *née* Sniggers ? I couldn’t imagine where I had seen that woman’s face before.”

“ Yes, you are right again,” said the youth ; “ confound her too. Where did you know them ? ”

But Lambard had gone tearing off to the other end of the station, exclaiming that, by Jove, he must have another good look at “ the Blobb,” as he called that great lady, in a most disrespectful manner. But they were gone, and he came back presently disappointed.

“ Who are they ? ” I asked.

“ I may, perhaps, tell you all in good time, my dear little ’un,” he said, with a very deep sigh, and as if now again going to have a reaction in his spirits. “ What do you intend to do with yourself this evening ? ” he inquired, as we walked down the steps together from the station.

“ I don’t seem to care, somehow, about dining at my club, as I meant to have done with two or three other fellows, and afterwards going to some theatre,

to wind up with Vauxhall or Cremorne, by way of a finish ; in short, what I am told is the regular every Derby-Day mill-track. It will be such a bore having to go through with all the congratulations, and then explanations, about that confounded winning ticket. What a lot of chaff, or, still worse, condolence, I shall have to stand for having spilt that money as I have ; for, of course, I must shell it all over as soon as it is paid to me.

“No, that will all keep very well till to-morrow ; but, to-night, if you will let me, my dear fellow, I will come and pick a bit quietly with you in your own rooms, and afterwards, if you're agreeable, over a tranquillizing pipe of peace, will go on with the rest of my story in connexion with that veritable limb of Satan, Master Gorles. Somehow, I feel specially in the humour this evening, and having now once got my start it will do me good, and be a real relief to my mind to unbosom myself and at last uncork, so to speak, some strange matters which have long been bottled up, and I have never yet told to any living soul as I feel inclined to tell them to you this evening. That is, if you will not be bored, and will have patience to hear me slick through to the end. I think you will then be ready to agree that it is from no mere imaginary or exaggerated prejudice, but a

well-founded conviction, and to repeat advisedly the strong expression I before made use of, a sense of something actually supernatural, or, as the Scotch say, ‘uncanny,’ on which my antipathies are founded.”

CHAPTER VI.

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI!

THERE are, indeed, many worse ways of enjoying a really genuine soft summer's evening, particularly after a broiling and exciting day, such as ours had been, than that hit upon by Frank Lambard and myself.

We leisurely disposed of as tolerable a dinner, in a very small way, as my very plain cook could on so short a notice manage ; and now, our arm-chairs drawn forward to either side of the wide-open window, a brimming claret-jug of Badminton, fresh iced, on a small table between us, while the lights of our cigars began to twinkle like bright stars, in contrast to the deepening shades of the twilight, calmly puffing, we sat for some little time, enjoying, in that contemplative silence which truly bespeaks the spirit of passive contentment, the bustle, life, and motion going on below us, watching, as we were, the return stream of carriages from Epsom.

Have I, by the way, yet mentioned that the cham-

bers which I occupy are situated, as it so happens, in one of the principal thoroughfares of the south-western district of the town ?

What “morals might he pointed and tales adorned,” by any poet, philosopher, or other general dealer in sentimental views on humanity, who, like us, that pleasant June evening, might have been reclining at his ease, contemplating the straggling line of vehicles of all sorts, classes, and descriptions, now making their way as best they could up that same road down which, within so few hours ago, in how different a condition, alas, how many had passed, “on pleasure bent,” that very morning !

Think of all those glorious—no, tiptop (that’s the right word)—“four in hands,” which rattled by so gaily, while I was still at breakfast, “all tooled by noble whips,” as described in the advertisements ; and really, I believe, popularly and sincerely supposed to be Right Honourable members of the Upper House, or, at least, genuine scions of the proudest aristocracy, whose affability and easy condescension of manners, combined with their skill in “handling the ribbons,” give a tone, not to say *éclat*, to the company, and contribute not a little to the, at least, temporary social position and consequently happiness, of the aspiring City clerks or West-end counter-jumpers,

who, for five-and-twenty shillings a head, have fairly entitled themselves to a holiday's enjoyment, *bon ton* and refreshments included. And small blame, too, to these honest gents, if, perched, as they were, on the top of "their drag," they may have cast the looks of scorn and pity upon the envious, but admiring world below. Who shall say that any one of them, in his faultless "get up" of new white hat and gauze veil, his graceful dust-coat, that indispensable desideratum for the Course (I am again quoting from the advertisement sheet) fluttering in the breeze; his tight kid gloves, grey, or even primrose colour, just seen peeping from his arms, rigidly folded across his manly breast, did not, as much as any duke or lord, ay, millionaire, or any guardsman on earth, or on horse either, for the matter of that, look every inch "the thing"?

Let those, then, who thus saw, envied, and admired bear well in mind that "'tis but once a year" when they shall recognise, if recognise they can, those same disdainful, would-be swells transformed as in a pantomime into the shouting noisy crew now passing below. All those who still have hats, with the brims of them stuck round with miniature lay figures in the nude; some perched aloft on hampers piled on high a-top of the coach; some lying full-length along the

cushions; others hanging on promiscuously to the steps or flying straps behind; some pelting the cheering crowd with snuff-boxes and pin-cushions, while, perhaps, one behind is at intervals enlivening them with most eccentric variations of popular airs on a cornet-à-piston, which has been handed to him by general vote as the most intoxicated and noisiest of the lot, "by way of keeping the fellow quiet." Oh, how their poor heads will crack and burn to-morrow from the effects of the villanous stuff they have been imbibing by the bucketful, which they insist upon, and rejoice in supposing to be champagne.

Why is it that to that particular genus, the City gent, and so many of the vulgar, not lower classes in general, the *summum bonum* of happiness and enjoyment, the highest refinement of all luxury, seems to be represented by, and connected in their minds with the prevailing idea of "Lots of champagne"? Well, well, if all cannot understand it, it has been real enjoyment to them, and though they will suffer for it to-morrow, by Friday next, let us hope, they will be all right again.

It would be well if their poor, jaded, over-strained horses, whose wretched flanks begrimed with dust and sweat, and whose staggering steps afford, if not as striking, a far more painful contrast to their gingery

splendour of the morning, could hope as easily to recover themselves. Poor beasts ! the best look-out in store for them would be to fall down in the road and die at once, as has been the fate of probably not a few by this time. If they only knew it, how much to be envied by their less fortunate because tougher brethren !

Though whilst thus sympathizing with the beast, what Christian of common charity will not also drop a tear of pity for the sufferings of his fellow-man ! as next appears a lately "noble whip," who, oh, bitter ignominy ! has to bring back his once glad company, dragged only by a tottering pair ! shorn of their leaders, who have either dropped on the road from sheer exhaustion, or perhaps even worse, turned restive, kicked, or gibbed, and to the disgrace of all concerned, unavoidably sent back under the care of the ostler.

Well may he hold down the head of shame, and let his double thong, now but a mockery and derision of his former greatness, trail like a drooping banner over his shoulder !

Some may be even worse off still, if that is possible, than having to come back thus shorn of half their glory, and never come back at all ! Horses, vehicle, "noble whip," with all those gallant souls who trusted

to his skill, gone none know's where ; reduced into their primitive atoms, having been violently run into indorsely or collaterally by some heavier and more potent vehicle. How many have thus been compelled to leave their wrecked and scattered remains by the way-side, shunted off into ditches, to become the prey of gipseys or other freebooting wanderers, who will have carried all off piece-meal before morning.

Happy, indeed, if some, at least, of those whose absence is already, or very soon will be, causing no small trepidation in their respective domestic circles, and as the hours grow later, giving rise to the most direful speculations and anxieties, not to speak of hysteric palpitations in the tender bosoms of their watching and expectant wives and families. Happy, indeed, if they have not some of them fallen into the hands of the stern myrmidons of the law, and are this night expiating their offences in some one of her Majesty's metropolitan or suburban police stations—some trifling difference of opinion having perhaps unhappily arisen between some of their jovial party and the officials, which may have led to an exasperated “noble” cutting the latter over the ears with his whip ; or his companions, if not strictly in arms, certainly in liquor, having perhaps pelted them with wine bottles, whistling shells, or other playful missiles nearest at

hand; which indiscretion has resulted in the whole set of them having been led away by overwhelming forces to the

“Drear depths of dungeons deep,”

while their equipage has become the spoil of the avenger.

Who can, or indeed does any one, care to tell for certain what becomes of all the victims of all those casualties familiarly known as “smashes,” caused by wheels coming off, splinter bars and poles breaking, flies overturning, donkey carts upsetting, in short, the thousand and one accidents which on every recurring Derby-day are wont to strew the roads with broken bones, broken necks, broken heads, and broken-up people of all sorts and sizes, giving the neighbourhood of—let us take for instance as a central spot the Cock at Sutton—more the appearance of a battle field than of a peaceful house of entertainment? Do the parish registers of that, at other times, retired village exhibit any particular increase of average in their burial records at this particular season of the year? Or have they perhaps a large grave prepared beforehand in the garden behind that famous hostelry, where the corpses are buried at once as they are brought in, and no more said about them?

Out upon such ghastly thoughts, and change the

theme, for—look below and see—barouches full of beautiful ladies; bless their pretty bonnets! for we cannot see their faces from up here where we are, all white muslin and blue ribbons, and for all we can make out to the contrary by this light, all as fresh and beautiful as when they started.

Mark those great flapping hampers, insecurely hanging on behind; how suggestive of Belshazzeric banquets on the Course? and who does not envy those happy fellows with them, who have been brought back occupying the privileged place of bodkin though nearly smothered in the midst of their furbelows, while two more perhaps who, we may be certain, never were allowed to go down like that, return seated in the folds of the carriage hood behind.

Their postilions may well be, as they seem, proud of such a freight, cracking their whips and shouting as they dash quite regardless of consequences amongst the great elephantine vans full of jolly holiday folk, gorgeous with bright colours, green branches and brilliant handkerchiefs displayed on sticks, like flags of victory.

Bang they go, now on this, now on the other side, against reckless Hansoms, whose drivers always will insist upon their right of cutting in first everywhere, over the kerb-stone or even the foot pavement. They

would drive up door-steps if they happened to come in their way, it is all the same to them.

More barouches, more four-in-hands, more vans, tax carts, gigs, and phaetons; and then comes a lot who really ought to know better, than to have allowed their livery servants on the box to sit with paste-board noses and sham moustaches, and those indecent dolls again, stuck round their cockades; and their postilions with dilapidated hats, and faces the same colour as their scarlet jackets were before they rolled in the dusty road, as they evidently have done, both as drunk as fiddlers, or lords, or any other individual characters usually supposed to be in that reprehensible condition.

And so they go on; the whole hubbub of shouting, whip cracking, panel smashing, laughing, chaffing, swearing, and horn-blowing, toned together as it were, and harmonized by the treble accompaniment of cheers and yells of the little bare-footed boys, who feel it to be their special duty to run and halloo, and tumble head over heels, at the risk of their lives among the crowded horses and carriages, for apparently no earthly object or reason, except the natural exuberance of over-bursting spirits, and to show that even they claim some share in the general enjoyment of the great saturnalia of the British public.

“Hang me,” said Lambard, all of a sudden, “if this

is not enough to make a man a poet! The sort of mental effervescence and succession of changing impressions which go on inside one, *spiritually* I mean, when looking down upon a bewildering scrimmage like this, are, I believe, the workings of the genuine poetic faculties of our nature, if one only knew how to set about realizing them on to paper; or even a slate would do perhaps better, as more easy to correct. Good, first-rate rattling epics I mean. Would not old Homer have set all the fun and row, mixed with trouble and sorrows, now going on below, into longs and shorts—no, by the way, he wrote only in hexameters—and described every feeling and character of the crowd, just as one could do it one's self if one could only find the words. Not that I can pretend to have much cultivated that gentleman's acquaintance since I left school; but I have often thought I should have better appreciated those great rolling verses of his, if it had not been for the way they tried to inculcate his beauties into one's head by the longest way round, as they did. Anyhow, from what I do remember of him, his was more my notion of real life and energy, and struggling spirits too big for their mortal bodies, and in fact general "go," than all that namby-pamby stuff written now-a-days by fellows who get away into retired holes in the lake countries, or up trees, I should

say, or mountains in Wales, more I believe because milk and eggs are cheaper there than from any other particular love of nature, which is what they always try to gain the credit for. The fact is, I sometimes cannot help thinking that if I did not happen to have grown into such a great hulking strong animal as I am, and so have been obliged to work off my over-charged animal spirits by rowing, mountain climbing, lion shooting, and plenty of hard exercise, I should not have minded taking up the poetic line of business myself. Well, sir, what is there to grin at? But you are just as you always were at school, an impudent little beggar." He went on half-laughing, as I could tell by his voice, half-inclined to be angry—"Well, you may snigger, but I feel something within me, quite an indefinite sort of feeling, you know, that sometimes tells me that if I could by practice only get over the difficulties of the metre, and manage the rhymes a bit better than I know I as yet can, I often catch floating in my mind lots of stunning ideas which some of your regular verse-mongers would be glad to give their ears for; and as to metre and rhyme, why some of the crack poets of the present day do not feel themselves the least bound by such old-fashioned notions, nor are over particular as to sense or matter either, if you come to that; though I must confess that

that is a school which I do not feel myself worthy of understanding, nor therefore capable of appreciating.

“But I never should be surprised if I some fine day got up, like, who was it? and found myself a famous poet, without knowing it.”

It was too dark to see by Lambard's face whether he was really in earnest or not in this quite unexpected and bold assertion; to tell the truth, I do not think he would have been quite able to settle that point himself. But after having thus confidently announced these certainly rather bombastic anticipations of future literary fame, he remained for another ten minutes or so silently ruminating thereon and then, rather abruptly, delivered himself of, as I suppose, the result of his own reflections, in the simple, but very expressive dissyllable of “Bunkum!”

“Come,” he broke out, “I thought you wanted to know the rest of my story about Gorles, or what is all to the same purpose, I want, and have made up my mind to tell you; so here goes!——”

Before my friend again takes up the thread of this (to himself at least) very interesting, though as it proceeds occasionally almost incredible narrative, I think that I may as well here (*par parenthèse*) remark, that although I received from him the main and general outline of his story that night, as we sat

smoking together till all sorts of hours into next morning, yet it must not be supposed that I can pretend to have heard the whole of the facts as I shall endeavour to narrate them—to use one of his own poetic expressions, “Slick-on-end off,” at that one time.

On many subsequent occasions, for we were during the rest of that summer thrown much more together than we had ever been since our school-days, and finding in me, I fancy, a listener worthy of the subject, I had full opportunity of fitting in and filling out many details and minor combinations of circumstances which he would add from one time to another, sometimes telling me something quite fresh, sometimes going over

again what he might have told me before, not unfrequently in a somewhat new light, or form; then, again, he would sometimes bring in selections from notes, or scattered fragments from an irregular sort of diary he had been by way of keeping, and insist upon my arranging them into some corrected form.

I wish, by this sort of preface, out of place, to explain that I have done my best to tell Frank Lambard’s “round, unvarnished tale,” such as it is, as much as possible in his own style and words, without again having to break off, with the many interruptions and interpolations, as they really occurred, thus

avoiding the very tiresome example of that eloquent lady, the Princess—— wasn't she? or Sultana for the time being, Scheherazade, in the Arabian Nights, who, by the way, must have been quite as strong-minded a specimen of woman-kind as she was beautiful, self-devoting, and loquacious. A most rare combination of qualities !

Think what her feelings must have been when, finding herself well into the full swing of one of her very best stories, she saw the first gleam of morning light insinuating itself through the shutter cracks ; and had to pull up short !

In these days could there be found one of her lovely sex who, with so much to tell and such natural gifts for telling it, could even under the same circumstances (which in her case were certainly unusually pressing) possibly, think you, be willing or able to exercise a like control over her tongue ? or let us rather express it as her brilliant powers of narration ; it must have been indeed a trial, and so far all the more worthy of our sincere admiration ; and in her particular case the practice may therefore perhaps be deemed excusable, though tiresome to a degree, and certainly not to be followed as an example.

CHAPTER VII.

“SHOULD OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?”

“So here goes!”—was Lambard’s re-introduction of the subject; the first fytte, if I may so call it, he had brought to a close on our arrival at the Kingston Station in the morning.

“With the exception of the twice I have mentioned of Gorles, mine enemy, turning up again at Eton, which two occasions were indeed within a very short time of each other, I was no more haunted by the influence of the little wretch during my stay at that ‘Seminary of useful learning,’ as the old Provost used to call it; don’t you remember, in that long palaver before giving out the text of his sermon?—nor, indeed, for two or three years did we at all run against one another.

For by my going up to Cambridge, whereas the “opposition shop” had the honour of conferring a degree upon Gorles, our starts in life seemed, as I am sure I was only too glad to think, destined to branch

off into separate directions, without much chance of crossing.

I have though, by the way, a vague idea that he had something to do with that wherry which, perhaps you, if you were there that day, may remember, contrived so nearly to get in the way of our boat, and as close as a toucher lost us the University race at Mortlake, the year I pulled in that eight.

It may have been only imagination, for I didn't see him, it is true ; I was too excited to see anything ; but I certainly had the shrill pipe of his cracked voice in my ears at that moment, cheering on the Oxford men ; that, of course, he was quite right to do, if he had only minded his rudder, instead of allowing the boat he was steering to drift out from the bank almost under our very bows.

It may have been so, or was perhaps only my fancy ; but bar that, I was quite free of him, and for four or five years had, I may say, nearly forgotten the existence of my abhorrence until having, with every satisfaction and credit, to myself at least (though, perhaps, I says it as shouldn't), pulled successfully through a *Poll*-degree at Cambridge, I went in the course of the following year to settle for a few months at Dresden, by way of acquiring the specially throat excoriating language in which the natives in

those parts convey their muddle-headed ideas to one another.

It makes the back of my mouth feel sore and rough now, while I think of it.

I had at that time some relations living there : a step-sister of my own mother's, who was married to a colonel, a widower, with one daughter by his previous marriage, besides whom there was also one child, a boy, of her own. I knew so much, but had never seen them since I was quite a child, as ever since my Uncle Delorme had retired on half-pay, soon after his second marriage, they had, like many other English, settled abroad, partly from motives of economy, as well as for the education of their children.

Nothing could have been kinder than the warm and affectionate greeting which I received, immediately on my presenting myself with letters and full credentials from my mother, who had previously communicated my intention of turning up in that direction some day.

" Oh ! we are so sorry you did not come here last week," said my aunt ; " was it not too provoking, Katie, that Frank did not come ? An old school-fellow, and such a great friend of yours, was staying here ; indeed, it was through your name that we made his acquaintance."

"Or, rather, he made ours, mamma," said Miss Katie, rather demurely.

"Well, no matter; we were in the royal picture-gallery one morning, when he offered us the use of his catalogue, and then asked, most politely, whether we had lately heard anything of you or your family, as, being such an intimate friend, and anxious to hear of you, he could not resist venturing on the liberty, as he called it of addressing us. And so, having thus begun an acquaintance, we saw a great deal of him; indeed, if he had not been such a very old friend of yours, and therefore feeling bound to welcome him, we might have perhaps almost begun to think too much:—but there, he seemed to have such domestic and affectionate dispositions; and then, being here, you see, all alone, he used to come in and see us at all hours of the day, particularly at meal-times, because then, poor fellow, he was sure to find us at home; but he would sit on so late of an evening, that your uncle, who is, you know, rather an invalid, and fond of early hours, began, perhaps, sometimes to get just a little tired of him; but then, he used to talk so much and so constantly about you, and all your doings and sayings, that we did not like to be cold or uncivil to him. The provoking thing was, that the day after we had received your dear mother's.

letter, announcing your intention of coming out to this place, he came to tell us that, deeply as he regretted, and felt the great disappointment of missing you, he had just received a letter which would oblige him instantly to set out on most particular business, for somewhere or other, Vienna I think it was he said, or perhaps it was Venice; and so, to tell the truth, he entirely spoilt a little scheme Katie and I had begun to arrange, of bringing you together quite unexpectedly, and so witnessing and enjoying the delightful surprise it would have been for you to discover so old and dear a friend. It would have been quite the subject for a tableau, or the crowning incident of a magazine story."

"But what was his name?" I very naturally inquired, when I at last could manage to get in a word edgeways, for to tell the truth, my dear aunt, though the best of women—at least, at that time I thought her so—was a regular 'oner' to talk when she once got off with a fair start. 'But what was the name of this dearest friend of mine?' And in my mind I began to run over a list of all my old friends, of all times and places; amongst others your own occurred to me, my dear little 'un, though, believe me, I gave you instantly credit for too much tact to have bored them with your company, sir, which any one could see had

been the case with this dear friend, whoever he might be, in spite of my aunt's good-natured way of putting it.

But then, on the other hand, my uncle's pretty daughter, the plump, bright-eyed little Katie, regular little screamer as she was, then just turned eighteen, and who valed like an angel, would have been a fair excuse for any man for rather trespassing on their kindness, in doing his best to get as much of the tame cat's place in the chimney-corner, and of her merry company, as he could contrive to secure for himself.

"But who on earth, then," I asked, "could this dearest friend of mine be?"

"Guess, now," says my aunt; "we will give you three guesses," she went on, in that very provoking way that womankind often have of delighting in any trumpery mystification.

"Katie, try to describe him!" but I noticed that Katie did not at all seem to enter into the spirit of her step-mother's jokes, who, heaven forgive me for my impatience, I could not help thinking at the time was quite old enough to have known better. But Katie, strongly urged, undertook to give me a clue.

"Tall, broad shouldered, very fair, frank, open countenance, loud, deeply-toned voice, blunt, and free

spoken—there, now cannot you guess? or, perhaps, it may be easier if I tell you to treat my accurate description like a dream, and take it just exactly by contraries.”

Even then it did not dawn upon me; but when, at that moment, my uncle, who had come in, began to say something about my ill luck in missing my friend Gorles, you may, I am sure, quite imagine that, as our old school saying was, the ‘fat was in the fire,’ and no mistake!

Only think of the creature introducing and insinuating himself into the family circle of my relatives, who were, at that time, the very centre of the pleasantest small society of the English in Dresden, on the strength of his love and long-standing intimacy with myself, of all people in the world!

And what, if possible, provoked me even more specially was, that never having, as I have told you, seen or known me personally, my belongings had rather begun to draw an imaginary portrait of myself, their unsuspecting kinsman, judging of what my opinions, general views, and dispositions would be likely to be, from those of my supposed most intimate friend.

But when enlightened as to the plain truth, and they came fairly to speak out their real feelings, I

soon began to perceive that, although he certainly had, in spite of themselves, almost established an intimacy with them, yet the more they had come to know the less they had grown to like him.

It was in the course of subsequent confidential conversations that Katie herself confessed to me that she had not looked forward with much pleasure to my arrival, because, to say the truth, she had thought I should be like my best friend, Mr. Gorles ; and to him, for certain reasons, which I did not fully learn till some time later, she had, from the very first, taken a most mortal aversion.

Indeed, having made me promise not to tell my uncle or aunt, she went on so far as to own that she was absolutely afraid of him, and though she had always constrained herself to appear civil and friendly towards him, yet in her heart she quite dreaded the very sight of him.

And at last, by Jove ! she one day let out, not without much hesitation and beating about the bush, that her little brother Ferdy, a speckle-faced, most impudent young jackanapes of about twelve—you have seen him, by the way, our young sporting companion in the railway-carriage—had teased and tormented her to let him have a lock of her hair, to put into a locket which his mother had bought for him,

which same lock, as she had discovered, he had sold to Gorles for a thaler.

The poor girl had been afraid, she declared—that she could not tell exactly why—but that a sort of terror of some invisible danger restrained her from telling her parents, as of course she ought to have done immediately, and so the opportunity had passed by.

But ever since he had thus obtained that hair, she could not help fancying that he held a special power over her, and she shrunk from and dreaded him accordingly.

He had had the impudence to show her a large jewelled locket, in which he had invested, slung to his watch chain, containing hair, which, though morally convinced as she was that it was some of her own, she of course could not condescend to acknowledge, but was disgusted beyond measure to hear him declare that it was dearer and more valuable to him than his life, and boast how it would always give him an unbounded influence over the mind, and thoughts, and even actions of the person to whom it had originally belonged.

“And then,” she innocently added, “he stared up so hard, right into my eyes, as he was always doing, you know; and whenever he shook hands with

me, he would hold mine so tightly in his nasty, little hot grasp for ever so long, and always contrive to take a place close to me, even following me about the room, if I tried to move away from him."

"And over poor Ferdy too, of whom he, for some time after making our acquaintance, took immense notice, he seemed somehow to have gained the same strange sort of power. You can have no notion how altered and changed that boy has become from what he was—moping about and miserable, he seems at times as if he had something quite dreadful on his conscience; it really makes me glad when, as if by fits, he recovers his own character for mischief and impudent tricks; and though I was, of course, dreadfully angry with him for his wickedness, in making over that piece of my hair, which he had obtained so silyly, yet I cannot help believing his solemn assertion, that though he could give no reason, yet that he was obliged and bound to do what Mr. Gorles ordered, and that he really could not help himself: in short," she continued, "the very thoughts of him terrify me, and I perfectly hate him, and had quite made up my mind to hate you too, you dearest old Frank"—at least (correcting himself), perhaps she may not have said quite that exactly, you know—not that there would have been any harm if she had, though; for,

although we were not actually first cousins, we had from the first agreed to consider each other in that relationship, which soon placed us on the same footing as though we had really been so in fact.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS.

It was not, you must understand, all at once that I received these and similar confidences from dear little Katie, but bit by bit at different times.

Allowed as I was to spend as much of my time as I liked in my uncle's house, she and I soon became as intimate and friendly towards one another as cousins should be.

We had agreed to read a portion of Schiller or Göethe together every morning, and there was a strict rule that Katie was to talk to me in nothing but German, which rule was observed for perhaps an average of five minutes per diem. There was also, I remember, a very tough exercise of Ollendorff's, which alone took an average of a couple of hours every morning, for at least a week, in correcting ; so anxious and earnest was my pretty instructress in thoroughly grounding me in the language.

When I first heard from her of that interesting

episode of the lock, not "raped" exactly, like Pope's, but sneakingly obtained under false pretences, I was eager and ready to start off that instant for Vienna, or wherever I could catch the little wretch, to take the precious locket from his hateful possession, and wring his villanous little neck for him into the bargain.

But poor Katie begged and prayed, and cried so touchingly, that I would take no steps of the sort, evidently under a feeling of more than common excitement and fears of the strange and supernatural powers of ill which she fully believed that Gorles held over her, and would certainly exercise in the event of such an attack upon him as I proposed, that I was forced to yield ; and though I tried my best to combat these ideas in her, remembering as I did my own old school-boy feelings and terrors, I could not but be conscious of sympathizing in them, more than I at all allowed my fair confidante to suspect.

I told her what was the right thing to do, most strongly urging her to confide in, and seek counsel from, her parents, and to tell them fairly all that she had thus told me.

But nothing I had to say or urge could induce her to do so, for besides the sort of fearful spell to which she confessed herself subject, she also argued, not

perhaps without reason, that they would only laugh at or scold her as absurd, and call her romantic or fantastical; and, though she had almost from the very first felt an unaccountable antipathy for Gorles, that with her father and step-mother he was really rather a favourite than not.

In that opinion my own observations afterwards rather led me to think that Katie was mistaken, though, no doubt, he had, cunning as he was, for a time at least, contrived to what you may call "get round t'other side of both of them."

My aunt, you see, for whom I then, until I knew her better, cherished a great respect, had, as I think I have before hinted, more than usually gifted powers of the "Gab;" I beg her pardon, I ought, I suppose, more dutifully to express it as a redundant volubility of conversation.

Well, it all means the same; but with the well-established law of nature which abhors a vacuum, it is not to be wondered at, that to be able as she was to talk sixteen to the dozen on any conceivable subject which might happen to be uppermost in her active mind, she must needs have a corresponding aptitude, not to say necessity, for taking in, and from all sorts of sources increasing her store of ideas, combining facts with fancies, and sometimes fictions, about

people, places, and things in general, to keep up the supply of material which the unwearied activity of her tongue was perpetually exhausting. In short, to express it in plain prose, Mrs. Delorme, like a good many gentlewomen of her time of life, did dearly love gossip, in the full indulgence of which propensity there is always, of course, the double gratification of receiving as well as imparting.

Now of gossip, not to say scandal occasionally, which, like so many other little things in this world, is none the less pleasant for being wrong, Gorles, it seems, having very soon discovered her weak side, contrived to have plenty at her service, not only about the concerns of people in the world whom he did happen to know, but also including a larger class of those he did not know, but about whom he was, nevertheless, always ready with a great deal of second-hand information.

When folks have happened to live abroad for any time, you may perhaps yourself have observed, how greedy they will become of what they call "news" of their English friends, and what immense interest they will seem to take in the private affairs of former neighbours and acquaintances, sometimes to the most absurdly minute details.

The Colonel, too, for his part, had likewise, I per-

ceived, for some time at least, looked with favour upon this supposed friend of mine, perhaps a little influenced, I suspect, by the fact of no one else happening to be in the way just at that time who could play so good a hand at picquet in the evenings, at which, and indeed, almost all other games of cards, Gorles had from his youth up been always a particularly artful dodger.

And so for a certain time, as I say, he had rather encouraged and appreciated the little sinner's company, though latterly, just before he had departed, my uncle had begun to grumble, and grown somewhat tired of his constant appearance, which he was beginning to find rather too much of a good thing. Although matters might not perhaps have come to an upshot, unless, as it happened one day quite incidentally, the little fiend had actually gone so far as to assert that the affection and close friendship which he always persisted in as existing between himself and me, had originally commenced at Eton in consequence of his, Gorles's—oh, ye gods above, around, and below! fancy such barefaced audacity! Gorles's having been mainly instrumental in getting me out of an ugly scrape about some money that had been missed, and that but for his special intervention, he declared I must certainly have been expelled.

That most audacious and unwarrantable assertion, though my uncle could of course at the time have no idea of its peculiar atrocity, had, as far as I could make out, given the finishing turn to the old gentleman's feelings in regard to him, and he had plainly spoken out his mind to the effect that if there was the slightest foundation for such a story, which nothing should ever make him believe of the son of his old friend and comrade, Lambard, whom he had known and loved like a brother all his life, but even if it were not a scandalous lie, as he felt quite certain it was, that he could only remark, that after that the less Gorles had to say on the subject of his intimate friendship with his nephew the better it would be—if that was his way of speaking of his friends, and raking up old school stories and lies of that sort against them.

Angry enough my uncle must have been, as I could see, when, as you may suppose, on hearing this repeated, I enlightened him as to the real truth, telling him as I did the whole facts, chapter and verse, on hearing which his rage exceeded all ordinary bounds ; to that degree that when I went on to tell him about the diabolical influence to which I had been subject, and, in short, all I have told you, he seemed entirely to lose all discrimination in his wrath—so stern, and quite fierce were his tones and manner, when he abruptly

desired me to "stop that," and never, as I valued my own happiness, to tell, or even think of repeating that story again to anybody, or on any occasion. Nor have I ever done so until now—that is with the exception of on an occasion which I shall tell you presently.

And then, as the old gentleman cooled down, he, I remember, looked at me so very oddly, with a half-searching, half-pitying expression, and apropos to nothing, except maybe to change the subject of conversation entirely, asked me "whether I ever remembered seeing, or anybody had ever mentioned my grandfather to me?"

I really began to think that the burning indignation of his wrath had suddenly been too much for his brain, and that he was going daft on the spot.

Of Gorles's tricks, or audacious pretensions in regard to his daughter Katie, I am sure the peppery old fellow never had the slightest idea, or he would have probably put a summary and effectual bar to any further games of that sort, by pitching him straight out of the nearest window then and there.

As to myself, he presently apologized for his warmth; but again most solemnly warned me against ever repeating the strange story which had made him so angry. He over and over again inquired earnestly

whether I had ever spoken on that subject to his daughter, which, as it happened, I never had, though more than once it had been on the very tip of my tongue. He then put it to me, upon my sacred honour, as a gentleman, never to mention, or even allude to the matter directly or indirectly to either of his children, but more especially to Katie herself.

I willingly enough gave him my promise, and the old gentleman, who, though he pretended so thoroughly to pooh-pooh the whole idea, had, as I could see, in his heart not thought so lightly of it, seemed satisfied and relieved in his mind.

His manner became cordial as ever, and he took that opportunity of confidentially acknowledging to me that he also, just as Katie had done, had preconceived rather a prejudice against me before my arrival, and had wondered how any son of his old friend "Bullfinch" Lambard, as they used to call my poor father in the regiment, could possibly be such a chum, and on such thick terms of intimacy, with that half-bred little whipper-snapper Gorles.

CHAPTER IX.

TOO GOOD TO LAST LONG.

YOU were pleased, I think, my young friend, to grin somewhat sarcastically (to give no stronger term to that breach of manners on your part) upon my just now mentioning to you my earnest conviction—that, if it were not for the length of my limbs, and the strength of my muscular development, and if, perhaps, a rather more assiduous cultivation of the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, or whatever the English equivalent to that most useful work may be, could have been managed in the days of my youth, Nature had originally three-quarters of a mind to make a poet of me.

What will you say then, if, overlooking your disrespectful incredulity on that score, I now inform you confidentially, that although I never set up to be, as of course I know I never was, much of a scholar, yet that if I, or rather my pastors and masters, whose duty it was to have discovered the natural bias of my mind,

and to have trained it accordingly when young and ductile, had only luckily hit upon the right clue, I feel convinced that my best chance of an illustrious career would have been to have devoted myself to the abstruser studies of psychology, and the general philosophies of human nature; who knows, but I might have attained rank among some of the greatest theoretical, if not practical, philosophers of these philosophic times.

What, are you at it again? It is no use pretending to drink, for there is nothing left in your tumbler, and I can hear the edge of the glass jingling against your teeth. Well, laugh and snigger if you must, but don't choke yourself, that's not worth while.

Yes, though perhaps if never destined to be a poet, I sometimes feel that the other chance of becoming illustrious is not altogether out of the question.

Though by no means habitually, yet occasionally, I indulge in profound reflections on profound subjects; and sitting down late one night to my writing table, determined before I retired to rest to embody and arrange in some tangible form some ideas of things in general, which had in the course of the day been floating through my mind, suddenly—more, I own, by chance or instinct than by any progressive train of

thought—I in a moment hit upon, and found myself to be the accidental discoverer of one of those great secrets of nature's laws which, with proper elucidation by any one who was used to that sort of thing, would, I feel convinced, prove of the greatest value to science, and will hereafter be generally acknowledged and become reduced to a recognised system, just as the discovery of the centre of gravity was by Newton himself.

Now, while mentioning that most eminent name, I cannot refrain from remarking between ourselves that, whatever he may have deserved on all other points, I never can help thinking that he gained a great deal more κῦδος than he had any right to on the score of that tumbling apple.

If it was ripe, as I suppose it must have been, when the stalk could hold it no longer, why, of course, it gave way and down it fell. Any one else but such a dunder-headed old Don as he must have been would have picked it up and ate it, and thought no more about it, unless it had happened to disagree with him afterwards; but at any rate he should have known that it was nothing new for apples to tumble when their stalk ceases to be strong enough to hold them, instead of flying up into the air like a soap bubble, as he certainly seemed to have expected; and there, I grant,

if it had done so, might have been something to speculate and wonder about.

But as it turned out that upon the observation of that simple and most common place incident one of the most important principles of creation was discovered by the great Sir Isaac, so it was that I, by a rather slovenly trick I have, when in deep thought, as suddenly hit upon the secret on which, quite equally to that of gravity in the physical world, the whole spiritual economy of human nature centres and depends—namely, the as yet, that is, till as I tell you, it was revealed to myself, undiscovered Principle of Contraries.

Why is it, I, all of a moment, asked myself, an undoubted and immutable fact, that when I kick my slippers off under the table, and then try to fish them back again with my toes, that my left toe invariably finds its way into the right foot slipper, and the right toe *vice versa*?

Is it not always so? In every common act and incident of life does not that principle of contraries apply? Is it not universally allowed to be the exception, if it does not rain when any particularly pleasant picnic or out-door party has been arranged, or any review or public holiday for the enjoyment of which fine weather is essential?

Did you or anybody ever want to buy a horse, a yacht, or first-rate dog, or in short anything of that sort for which you may have been on the look for weeks in vain, and having at last paid more than you meant to do for probably even then not quite the thing you wanted, is it not by an invariable law of circumstances that you, within two or three days after your unsatisfactory purchase, meet with exactly the very animal, or whatever the object in request may happen to be, at half the price ?

Is that chance ? Bah ! Is it not always so ? Quite as immutable a certainty as that an apple will always tumble down when it cannot stay up any longer. I could furnish you with a thousand more familiar instances of the same principle from simple every-day incidents of life.

Working out, then, this great theory with all its ramifications and consequences in my mind, I have been brought to observe one special rule and axiom, which is, that if in the course of this life, as it is at present constituted, we poor mortals at any particular moment become—(unhappily for ourselves, though of course at the time it seems precisely the reverse)—conscious of present perfect enjoyment and contentment ; either in, let us say, the attainment of any long-desired object ; the opening of any new career which promises

certain success ; the riddance or escape from any particular annoyance or trial of life ; the reciprocal affection and attachment to some other being, which is no doubt the most delicious feeling of which the human mind is capable, or, in short, any other of the undoubted sources of human happiness, I do not say, mind, but that the pleasure may endure for some time unrecognised, and that when it is past and gone, one may on looking back feel satisfied at having experienced comparatively lasting periods of great enjoyment and bliss ; but by the strict rule of contraries, the instant the consciousness of such satisfaction, being actually present, becomes quickened within us, and one's soul is, so to speak, indiscreet enough to congratulate its owner on its then enviable lot—presto !—it is gone—I do not pretend to explain where or wherefore, I only stick to the fact that it is invariably the case.

The same instant that happiness in any human being has arrived at the point of being felt and recognised, while it is actually being enjoyed, so sure may the adverse turn be known to be close at hand.

An immediate re-action of proportionate unhappiness and disappointment is inevitable, by just as cer-

tain a law of nature as that night will succeed day, or that the tide will begin to ebb as soon as the last point of high water-mark has been reached.

Now the particular application of these undoubted scientific truths to my own story is, that if I had only known, in those days, all that by my own thought and experience I have since discovered and digested, I should probably not have enjoyed those thrice happy days at Dresden as I did. No, no, my dear fellow, I should have known, from the very fact of being jolly as I was, that breakers were close a-head, and so, instead of entirely enjoying myself, been keeping one eye "looking out for squalls."

Jolly I certainly was while it lasted ; "jolly as a sand-boy," as the saying is, though, by the way, why a sand-boy's lot should thus proverbially typify the height of human joy, I do not know. I don't, indeed, know that I ever met a sand-boy personally ; and the untimely fate of the only one I can remember to have heard of, in that imperishable romaunt of real life familiar to us all—

"Who went and cut his throat with a little piece of glass,
All for love of the Ratcatcher's daughter,"

would rather seem to tell the other way.

Indeed how could I but be happy as the day was

long? I should have liked those days to have stood still, and remained for ever always just the same—the most fatal of all symptoms! and so, as you shall hear, I found it.

CHAPTER X.

HAPPY DAYS AT DRESDEN.

WELL then, not to pursue further those abstruse subjects, which, as I perceive, you think tiresome, being, I suppose, beyond the depth of your unphilosophical brain, let me briefly wind up the description of those happy days, passed as I have already mentioned almost entirely in the society of the bewitching little Katie, who had adopted me, as I had her, into the closest relationship of first cousin-hood.

Thoroughly established in my uncle's family as "*enfant de maison*," although I continued my original separate lodgings, I went in and out just as I liked, always sure of a warm welcome when I made my appearance; and what is the real secret of making one feel at home, they none of them ever pretended to put themselves out in the slightest way for me, or to make the least difference in their daily occupations or amusements in consequence either of my presence or my absence.

I began after a bit to find that I was picking up a

little of the language, to a certain amount at least, and generally after passing my mornings at a fencing-school, which I and some other fellows at a tutor's there had instituted, or else pulling in an out-rigger on the Elbe, to the great amazement of the natives, my afternoons, or I might more properly say after-early-dinners, were devoted to family excursions, down to Saxon Switzerland, or Moritzberg, or Meissen, or some of the many outlying places which have been set down by the omniscient and despotic Murray in his *Handbook* as "things to be done."

When not so far, what jolly walks and strolls I used to have with my relatives under the avenues of the Grosse Garten, or on the Brühl'sche Terrasse, enjoying the really pretty scenery, and the bands of music, and the groups of happy folk sitting out under the trees, with their children playing around them, as they imbibed their *al fresco* refreshments; all the while growing as I was every day more and more fond and attached to — my uncle and aunt, and all of them.

Katie and I had, as time ran on, gradually fallen into the recognised habit of getting off for these delightful walks and evening strolls together alone, without any opposition, or indeed, as far as we knew, any remark on the part of the old birds.

I believe it had at first been supposed the correct thing to send the small brother Ferdy out with us, by way of chaperon (or what is familiarly known by "missy" young ladies as "daisypicker"), in compliance with some not quite effaced compunctions and notions of British propriety floating through my aunt's matronly brain.

Master Ferdy was, as I think I have already told you, a queer looking young animal, with a face covered with freckles, as if an over-ripe gooseberry had been skilfully aimed at the centre of his pug-nose, and the seeds squashed all over his expressive countenance; by no means agreeable to look at, and particularly disagreeable in his manners and customs, as his species at that period of their existence are too apt to be.

You never exactly knew where to have the creature, alternating as he at different times seemed to do, in temper and character from the most audacious vivacity and impudence, which I must say appeared to be his normal state, to occasional fits of the lowest and most morbid dismals, just as his sister had one day described to me, as if he were quite overwhelmed by the consciousness of some tremendous crime or secret.

I do not know that I should have particularly noticed, or at least given a second thought to the fickle

eccentricities of that infant mind, beyond perhaps thinking it odd that one of his tender years should have so precociously fallen out with and succumbed to his own liver, as I supposed was the case, were it not from Katie's having remarked it to me, as she had, as something new and unusual, as well as having it afterwards recalled to my mind, when, as I shall tell you, I came to hear the flibbertygibbet's own account of the cause of his griefs and remorseful pangs.

At that time, however, whether vivacious or in the dumps, we of course voted him a nuisance and a bore, so I used to dismiss him to his own devices with a friendly application of my toe; and I may say that he, on his part, seemed quite as little to care for or appreciate the pleasure of our company as we did his, and so it came to pass, that though, for some time, it was a sort of understood thing that we did not go beyond the public walks of the Grosse Garten, or the Terrasse, as the authorities had never, in so many words said anything to the contrary, and, somehow, neither of us had thought it worth while mentioning, we, on one particularly beautiful afternoon, agreed to carry out an expedition we had for some time before talked of between ourselves, of clambering up to the top of the Wolfshügel to see the sun set.

CHAPTER XI.

SUNSET FROM THE WOLFSHÜGEL.

THE Wolfshügel is an eminence, or, in plainer terms, a great high mound, whether natural or artificial I am not prepared to state, something between two and three miles outside Dresden, on the Pillnitz Road, on the other side of the river, from the city, having, I believe, like most of those outlying places, some cock-and-bull legend attached to it, which, if I ever heard, I have forgotten, but have no doubt it may be found in the pages of Murray's red-book, before alluded to.

Some hundred feet or so, more or less, high, its top is accessible by an irregular sort of 'half-pathway, half-rustic staircase. It is one of the favourite resorts, in the summer time, for Dresden cockneys, who go out there on fine Sunday afternoons, to enjoy themselves in the absorption of that muddy, nauseous compound which they, poor, ignorant souls, imagine to be, and call by the name of beer, while they contemplate the really fine panorama of their city below,

with the Elbe flowing beneath its handsome stone bridge for a foreground, and the well-shaped domes and quaint old spires thrown out into full relief by the sun setting behind them—as I daresay it was the particular evening I remember so well.

That evening there was, however, not another soul in the place—we had it all to ourselves. It is a stiffish pull up to the top, and I was obliged to hold Katie's hand very tight, to haul her up the scrambling way after me.

I have said we were quite alone, but so we had been many times before. It was a delicious evening, the most deliciously soft blowing air I think I ever experienced.

We, somehow, had not been talking much the latter part of our walk, though habitually, when we were together, we had so much to say to one another, that my aunt used to declare that she never could find a chance of getting in a single word when we two were there.

Did you ever, by chance, at any scientific lecture or institution, either from motives of curiosity, or in the pursuit of useful information, try the effect of a galvanic battery on your elbow-joints, or weakly dip your hand into the water inhabited by an electric eel?

Well, it is not pleasant, or a sensation which most people seem to care about trying more than once in their lives ; and yet, if you have sufficient refinement of sensibility to take in and understand a comparison or simile, by which an idea can be conveyed of how two feelings can be precisely similar, and yet at the same time exactly the reverse, then, perhaps, you may form some notion of the exquisitely intense, though, at the same time delightful sensation which suddenly shot through, not only my elbow-joints, but my whole system, from the dear little soft hand of Katie, held, as it was, tightly in mine.

Gently, though intensely, and quite distinctly, I felt an electric shock, like a solid bubble, pass, as if from down through her arm and hand, into and up through my own. I seemed momentarily conscious of it in her before it had actually reached me, instantaneous as it was.

Why I felt that I did not dare look round at her till we reached the top, I do not know, but such was my thought, and I didn't.

It is only a great bare place, when you have got there, with a few straggling furze bushes, and sand, and an attempt at grass much trodden down by beer-soaking German Sunday-outers.

When we were fairly landed, I did look into her face ;

Katie was blushing up to the very roots of her hair—perhaps it was only the exertion of clambering up—but she answered my look with a bright flash of light from her eyes, which I felt go through and through me like—like what, shall I say? It was piercing, and yet so soft and gentle, it was like a consolidated sunbeam wrapped in velvet.

I longed to speak, and say something, though I scarcely knew what, but it seemed beyond the power of utterance. Just as I was conscious of the electric vitality in her before it had reached me, so did she seem intuitively conscious of what was working in my brain, as if it had been her own. Before I could express or arrange my bubbling feelings into words, she whispered to me deprecatingly, though without seeming to move her lips, which were half open in a loving smile—"Don't say it, Frank; don't, please, tell me; let us go on as we have been; if you only speak, our happiness will vanish for ever."

And, by Jove, sir, she was right, for though so young and fresh to life, she seemed, by instinct, intuitively to feel that truth which it took ever so much experience, and no end of after reflection, to teach me.

I did speak, though I hardly knew at the time, and could not tell now what it was I said.

But I wish to heaven I had obeyed her, and had bitten my own tongue off at its root first.

But there, out it came in some sort of words or broken sentences, an incoherent rush of—not exactly sentimentality, for that is not in my line—but rhodomontade of some kind or another, having, perhaps, no very precise meaning or connection in particular—not that that mattered; there was no need of any explanation in the case. By that flash of our eyes, and that touch of our finger-ends, more than any words could ever convey was understood between us in an instant.

In how long, or why we started to come down again from the mound, I don't exactly know.

The sunset which we had climbed up on purpose to see, was, I dare say, and have no reason to doubt, that evening even more than usually magnificent; though, as it happens, I cannot call to mind its having made the slightest impression upon me; I rather think that we stood hand-in-hand with our faces turned towards the opposite side of the horizon.

That may be so; I cannot tell; I only do know that I neither dropped on one knee as a hero in a novel or a play does, and so I suppose I ought to have done, nor smote my breast, nor covered the fair hand I held with kisses. I was bending reverently towards her to catch her faint whisper, and could almost feel her soft

breath upon my cheek, when—blobb—came a great buzzing beetle, flying as those blundering beasts will do, you know, looking one way while steering the other, and, hitting me on the face with a slap which made me start again, bounded off so hard that it actually got itself entangled in Katie's hair, and there hung buzzing with its nasty hind legs scratching her darling little ear, until not without some difficulty managed to extricate it.

I was thinking more of not hurting her, than I was of the beetle, which, though as a rule I never can bear to injure the smallest insect, I wish now I had trod upon, and smashed upon the spot!

But no sooner had I loosened it, than it was gone, we could not tell where; neither of us saw it fly off, and the next instant, when we were looking everywhere about for it, on the ground and all around, it was nowhere to be seen; it was gone!

The same thought, ridiculous as I dare say you will think it, at the same moment flashed through the minds of both of us; Katie with a shudder uttered the name of Gorles! as I at that very same instant exclaimed, "The little devil himself."

This anyhow brought us to our senses, and having descended, we set out to make the best of our way home, walking rather faster than usual, for we felt

somehow it would not do to be late. Side by side we pushed along, hardly exchanging a word the whole way, except Katie once, with a very deep sigh, spoke more to herself than me, or perhaps seemed involuntarily to give utterance to her inward thoughts, as suddenly she exclaimed, though in a low voice, "Oh, I wish he had never spoken, for now something tells me, we shall never be the same again!" and again, simultaneously—though, in spite of myself—I could have almost felt angry with the poor little girl for uttering such an unlucky thought—I felt conscious of a similar presentiment of evil in my own heart as it shrunk up sensibly within me.

CHAPTER XII.

OUT OF TIME, ALL TOGETHER.

I DON'T think we exchanged another word until, upon the door step of her home, I took her hand again in mine, and said "Katie, am I to say anything to Uncle George?"

"Oh, Frank!" she answered, softly, "why couldn't we have gone on together as we have been? So very, very happy; and now it is all shattered like a broken glass! all changed and lost, and I know some great misfortune is going to happen to us!"

She spoke quite passionately, almost in bitter anger with myself I thought, and went in, and straight up to her own room.

. I hesitated for a few minutes whether to walk in as usual to tea or not, but I thought it would seem strange if I didn't; so, not without having to fortify myself by counting ten slowly while twiddling with the door handle, I presented myself, as I felt painfully conscious, with an embarrassed and quite different air

from that with which I had ever before entered that same room. I was almost prepared to be cross-examined. I should not have been much surprised if I had been "blown up" for going so far, and keeping Katie out so late.

It was positively a relief when my uncle, waking up from his evening snooze with a grunt, only said in his usual kind, cheery tone of voice: "Halloa! Master Frank, is that you? Well, now, I suppose, Katie is come in, she will give us some tea."

But in a short time their maid or nurse, or whatever she called herself, came in to say that her young lady felt a little over-tired with her walk, and having a headache, would be glad if she might have her tea sent into her own room.

So my aunt had to take her place at the tea-table; and then how well I remember every trifling incident of that weary evening; my mind was on the stretch, and I was yearning for Katie to come down again, selfish beast as I felt I was, if it was only for me to see her again for two minutes before I went away.

But the clock on the mantelpiece struck three when it meant to say nine, which irregularity did not escape my aunt's observation, and away she went on a tangent, being quite convinced that it was the effect either of cockroaches, or else mice getting into the works, which

opinion she first propounded, and then argued on both sides, for and against, nobody contradicting her, in a discourse on clocks and their contingencies, which would, I should think, fill at least forty pages of very close print; and then, unfortunately, something had gone wrong with the cream, on which discovery, breaking off abruptly at the fortieth page, or thereabouts, of the by no means nearly concluded previous subject, after testing the faulty delicacy by sniffing at it, cautiously sipping, and then holding it up to the lamp for minute ocular inspection, the good lady again broke covert in full cry, favouring us with a most complete disquisition upon the management of a dairy, and all matters connected with its in-door, as well as out-door economy; ranging discursively over the various peculiarities of pastures, meadow lands, butter cups, sweet hay, oil cake, mangold-wurzel, and swedes; freely interspersing many self-answered doubts and enquiries, and propounding not a few, as I should think, entirely new and somewhat startling facts connected with the natural habits, tastes, sympathies, and antipathies of cattle in general, not forgetting the several diseases, complaints, and affections to which horned beasts are liable, with some most original suggestions of her own for special treatment in special cases; indeed she was just expressing her conviction that the cow which had

supplied that particular jug of cream was suffering from low spirits and dyspepsia, and only required change of scene, when she suddenly discovered that having given her husband his cup of tea she had utterly forgotten to pour out any either for herself or me, so entirely carried away had she been by the earnestness of her discourse, the telling points of which she had been impressively marking with raps upon the table with her tea-spoon. It is very odd that I should be able so distinctly to remember such stuff as I do, for though it all went into my ears, at the time my thoughts were occupied on a very different subject.

The tea was all stone cold, and the clock again striking four instead of ten, I rose to wish them good night, for they kept early hours, and I knew there was no chance after that of seeing Katie again that evening.

And so I went home and to bed, but not to make much of a sleep of it. Rapturously happy as some few minutes of that day had been to me, I tossed round and round all night with dreadfully dismal, though at the same time quite indefinite forebodings of evil close impending.

I felt that "I had put my foot in it," and dosing or waking that horrible beast of a beetle kept haunting

me—now dancing and whirling in all sorts of shapes and different colours before my eyes, now buzzing to all sorts of tunes round and round my ears, and then it grew larger and larger, until I recognised the grinning features of Gorles himself, whom you remember I had not then set eyes upon for five or six years, and he burst into a fit of laughing at me, and buzzed away.

Of course that may have been a dream, but my impression is that I had not been asleep—any how, after that I could stand it, or rather lie there no longer, so I jumped up and went for an early bathe.

CHAPTER XIII.

INGENUI VULTUS PUER, INGENUI QUE PUDORIS !

IN spite of my early turn out, it was not until towards what seemed my usual hour, for fear of looking particular, that I found my way to Lüttichau Strasse, which was the name of the street where my relations lived, longing, yet half dreading all the while to see Katie, and wondering whether I should get her to come out with me the same as ever. As I sauntered, in spite of my eagerness, rather slowly up the opposite side of the way—whom should I see just hopping down the door steps but Master Ferdy, with his freckled face, even that off, rather more than usually indicative of toffy.

There was a most extraordinary compound of expression, a completely double expression, if I may so call it, of mischief and fright, both at the same time twinkling in his eyes and lurking about the corners of his mouth, as if, though dreading the consequences, he could not positively resist the malicious fun with which, in spite of himself, he addressed me when I came up to him.

With an indescribable wink of his eye, and a jerk of his thumb towards the interior of the house, he said —“ Oh my ! Cousin Frank, I’ve got something to tell you ! Here’s such a lark ! Katie has had a letter this morning, a love-letter I expect, only our lady’s-maid says it isn’t the right time for valentines, you know, and even if it was, these louts of foreigners don’t know what valentines are ; but this came under cover directed to me, and when I gave it to Katie you should see the colour she was, as red as a peony. Isn’t it prime ? but don’t you go and show me up now for having told you, because, perhaps, she would rather you didn’t know.”

“ You confounded young scamp,” I said, as I bonnetted his hat down over his face.

“ Ah, ah ! I thought it would make somebody jolly jealous,” sung out the impudent young wretch, with a *snooks* at me, just as he wriggled himself out of reach of my toe, with which if I had caught him as I tried, it would have been well into the middle of the next week before he forgot it, I’ll engage to say ; but fortunately for himself he escaped, and cut away with redoubled crows of defiance, while I ran up unannounced, as I always was accustomed to do, to the sitting-room on the first floor.

I found only my aunt there alone, well settled into

some new Tauchnitz novel, which must have been a real tackler, as, for the first time since my acquaintance had commenced, I found her disinclined to talk ; she just looked up from her book to tell me that poor Katie was suffering from a bad head-ache, and had not left her own room the whole morning, and that the colonel had said——and she stopped short ; as if, for once in a way, she had been going to rattle off, and had thought better of it ; then she relapsed so entirely into her absorbing romance, or whatever it was, that I found I only received rare and disjointed answers to my attempts at conversation : so after fidgetting a bit about the room, and asking my aunt if she felt inclined to come out for a walk, which she was not, I had nothing for it but to start out by myself, as the thought at the moment suddenly struck me, in pursuit of Master Ferdy, to whom I was just in the humour to administer a little serious counsel, or may be a little wholesome chastisement for his transgressions.

Pretty well knowing his haunts, I came suddenly upon my young friend in a corner of the Grosse Garten, where with two other little urchins, who went to the same day school as himself, he was partaking in the enjoyment of mud pies, and swimming walnut-shell boats in the boundary ditch of that Elysium.

Before he was even aware of the approach of the enemy I had clutched the young gentleman by the scruff of the neck, to the great and manifold amazement, not only of himself and his juvenile companions, who fled away howling, but also of two sky-blue dragoons in Minerva's shaped helmets, who, seated on one of the benches hard by, had sought that unfrequented spot to discuss together in retirement bonbons and other sweet stuff, in which delicacies it is the custom of those warlike youths of the Saxon army to expend the greater portion of their monthly pay.

At first, the hands of those sons of Mars instinctively flying to their sword hilts, they had seemed half inclined to interfere in aid of the victim of the sudden assault which they had witnessed ; but either perceiving my stout walking-cane, or very likely recognising all parties concerned as *Englishers*, and, therefore, incomprehensible and unaccountable, they shrugged their shoulders, and between them pulled a fresh bonbon with a crack which made their eyes sparkle with enthusiasm.

"Now, young man," I said, addressing Ferdy, who was wriggling in my grasp like a lively eel, "I've got you ; listen to me quietly and I won't hurt you, and if, like that fellow I heard you spouting about from

your Virgil the other morning, you will come quietly, and ‘sit down under yonder wide-spreading beech-tree;’ I only want to talk to you very seriously, but if you attempt to escape, or kick up any row, I shall feel compelled to shake you till every bone in your skin has jumbled out of its right place : in the first place how dare you use such an expression as you did this morning, in regard to any feeling as existing between your sister and myself? which, young imp as you are, I suppose you have sense to know, would, if it came to your father or mother’s ears, make all the difference in the world as regards the footing on which I am at present allowed to be in your family, and which I do not want to forfeit for the sake of your impudence and jabber; besides, your own good feeling ought to tell you that no English boy, however young, would ever couple such rude and vulgar ideas with his own sister’s name as love-letters, valentines, and jealousy, or trash of that sort. Why, if you had been sent to school in England instead of this humbugging place,” I slipped out, “the very first thing a school-boy learns at seven years old is, to keep secret from the others even his sisters’ Christian names, or any sort of mention about them. At least it was always so in my day, at private schools as well as Eton.

“But far worse than your impudent chaff to me,

is your allowing yourself to be the bearer of letters to Katie, which the writer, whoever he may be, does not venture to send to her openly ; for you must have had some previous underhand instructions in that matter, to have been thus trusted with an enclosure of that sort ; perhaps," I added (though I was sorry the next minute that it thus escaped me), "you knew that it came from the same person to whom you were little rascal enough to sell a piece of your sister's hair for a thaler ?"

This idea had got into my head, and tormented me nearly to distraction since hearing of the letter which she had thus clandestinely received.

"Holloa ! Cousin Frank, who put you up to that ? though it's a regular crammer to say that I ever sold it, all the same ; but I don't quite see what odds it is to you exactly, if I did," replied the urchin, seeming to be partially recovering some of his natural audacity. "Has Miss Katie told you that ? I don't think she need have pretended to be so shocked and ashamed that she couldn't bear to think that anybody should know it, and made me promise not to say anything about it before Papa, or Mamma, or anybody ; but was it really her who told you ? for if she did, she is a regular sneak."

"Is it likely," I answered, rather jesuitically, with

another question, "that if she, as you tell me, was too much annoyed to wish anybody to know such a thing, even your papa and mamma, that she should tell a distant connexion, a comparative stranger like myself?—but I know it, and that is enough."

"Then you must have had a letter from your friend Mr. Gorles himself, and what a regular chouse of him to sneak of me, because I wouldn't have done such a thing, I am sure, if I could have helped myself, but I really couldn't. But he put me up to begging that lock of hair of Katie for myself, and then, for he was always very goodnatured to me, he offered to take it himself to Elimeyer's, the jeweller, to be plaited, and put into my new locket which mamma had given to me; but when he brought it back to me, I saw it was a piece of brown silk, not quite the same colour, and accused him of playing me the trick to tease me; at first he denied it, but afterwards he said he wanted to keep that hair, to have a bit of fun with it, and he made me a present of a thaler, not for the hair, because I wouldn't have done such a thing as sell it to him; of course, it wasn't likely; but if I would promise not to tell anybody, that he never would either, as long as he lived. But now he has broken his word, and told you, I suppose, it is no secret; and I was really ashamed, and sorry, when Katie found it out, and

spoke to me so seriously about it ; but, as I say, I couldn't help it."

" Couldn't help it, you young rascal !" and I suppose the grip in which I still held his collar involuntarily tightened a little.

" No ! but don't choke me, Cousin Frank, or shake me so, till I feel all limp. No more could any one else, not even you yourself couldn't help yourself, though you are ever so much bigger, if he had you in his power as he has me. Why,"—and here the boy's eyes distended themselves to twice their usual size—"do you know that if Mr. Gorles chooses, he knows a secret by which he could strike me down dead on the spot, though he might be miles and miles away somewhere else ? He told me so himself, and after what I have seen of him, and myself been through with him, I am quite positive, certain that he really can : he has got my soul in his power, I know ; and what is more, I think he has my sister Katie's too, though I don't think she knows it yet, but she will find it out some day. I have never told anybody yet what I am going now to tell you ; but as he broke my secret, I can't see why I shouldn't break his ; indeed, I cannot go on much longer without telling somebody,—and perhaps as you are his old schoolfellow and friend, as I heard my papa one day say you were, he

wont mind so much, and wont strike me down this time ; but, anyhow, tell you I must, or I feel sometimes as if I should burst, and so I may as well die by one way as the other.’

And so, whimpering, and occasionally stopping as if to listen, or looking round in a wild and terrified manner, as if he really thought the fatal moment for striking was at hand, he certainly gave me a most extraordinary though circumstantial account of what, as he expressed it, “he had been through,” and why he was in the power of “my friend” Gorles, as he would persist in calling him.

Coupled with Lambard’s own experience and similar early impressions in connexion with this person, it is not very strange that he should have been so much struck with his young cousin’s wonderful story, as to have written it down while fresh in his memory, and having carefully read it over to the boy, made him sign his name at the bottom of it ; which authentic document, nearly written in the boy’s own words, I had in my own possession, and copied *verbatim*, as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

MASTER FERDY'S EXPERIENCES.

“WELL, then, Cousin Frank”—after a renewed torrent of entreaties to stand by him, and save him from the consequences of his confessions, which I promised to do if he concealed nothing—“well, then,” commenced the conscience-stricken Ferdy, “when your ‘great friend’ Mr. Gorles first called and made the acquaintance of them at home, he was always very kind to, and took much notice of me, and didn’t snub me and seem glad when it was time for me to be off to school, as you always do, you know; and in short, despise my company. On the contrary, he was always giving me lots of toffy and sugar-balls, and kreutzers almost every day, and if he met me in the street he would stop and nod to me, and very often join, and walk home with me; and sometimes he took me out for walks all by ourselves, and always seemed so kind, and wanting to know so much about us all at home. He liked me to tell him everything; all about poor little

Cicely, our sister who died, and how old she was, and what she was like, which I could not tell him, because I was ever such a little chap, quite a baby, at that time ; and about myself, and what I should like to be when I grew up, and so on ; and all about Katie, how old she was exactly, and when was her birthday, and what she liked best, and if I thought she liked any one best ; and he told me to ask our old nurse Harrison, who you know has been with Papa long before he married my Mamma, and before Katie was born, if she could remember exactly what time, whether in the morning or the evening she was born ;—and so I did, and nurse told me at eight minutes past nine on the morning of the 3rd of February exactly, which, when I told him, he wrote down in a little red note-book, into which he was always putting notes about all sorts of things which he used to ask me, and I used to tell him.

“ One day he took me into the Royal Fabriken with him, and while he and the man had gone on to the further part of the show-rooms, I unluckily happened to tumble against—well—no, I promised to tell you the truth—I was making the sails of one of the China windmills go round when it flew right off, and besides breaking itself, pitched into a lot of China flowers, which it knocked over and smashed all to bits.

“ Mr. Gorles came running back with the man when

they heard the row, and at first seemed going to blow me up no end ; but then he stopped, because, as I say, he was always very kind to me, and said he supposed it was an accident, and that he would pay the man what he asked for the damage, which was eight or nine thalers, and I must pay him back by degrees when I got the money ; and he never told of me, and forbade me to say anything about it at home ; and so, of course, how could I feel anything but most grateful and ready to do anything in the world he asked me ? For if it had not been for him, he told me that for wilfully touching and damaging King John's property I might have been taken up and put in prison for many months, perhaps sent altogether out of the country, but that his interest, and paying on the spot, as he had done, had saved me.

“It was about ten days or a fortnight after that he asked me when I thought I should be able to pay him, and I had to say I didn't know, but I only had fifteen kreutzers in the world. He told me that if I would promise and vow always to do implicitly all he wished, and keep his secrets, he would perhaps let me off at least part of the great sum he had so readily paid for me.

“And that is why I complied, and did not tell till Katie found it out and taxed me with it, about her hair,

and other strange things he made me do for him, for I never, even if I had wished, dared to refuse him.

“But one night—it was the night of Katie’s first ball at the King’s palace, and she, with Papa and Mamma, had just gone off, about eight in the evening, I was going to bed—when who should come into the little sitting room out of which, as you know, my room opens, but Mr. Gorles.

“He had come up without any one seeing him, for nurse and Clotilde the lady’s-maid had both gone out the moment mamma’s back was turned, as they always do, you know.

“He seemed to know it at least, for he never asked for them or looked surprised; but he said if, instead of going to bed so early, I should like to come with him, that he would take me out for a pleasant evening, and if I never told it would be great fun, and no one would be one bit the wiser. So, to deceive the servants he put the linen bag into the bed, which looked just like me curled up, and left some of my things and a pair of boots outside the door.

“I was in an awful funk, and knew what a jolly row there would be if I was found out; and yet I felt I could not refuse. I never could. When he made me do anything particular like that, he would hold me by my thumbs and look so hard into my eyes he made

me tremble, though I liked him, too, all the time;—so I shut my door, with the things tumbled outside, and followed him.

“There was no one to see us go downstairs or out of the street door. Instead of taking the way, as I expected, to his own lodgings, where I had been with him before unbeknown, we set out in just the opposite direction through different streets, till I knew we were in the Alte Markt, in the further corner of which we passed through a low archway, right on to the end of a sort of passage or yard full of old tubs and broken boxes and lumber, and then up a very narrow winding staircase, up and up, and creaked it did at every step,—I began to think we never should get to the top.

“I had to stop two or three times to take breath; besides, I began to be frightened lest perhaps he was leading me up some dreadful place to murder me, as, when I stopped, he turned to speak quite crossly and impatiently, and not at all like he generally used to do.

“At last, when I thought we must be getting nearly up to the sky, we came to a door at which he knocked one, two, three times slowly and distinctly; and when that opened with a click, but we saw no one, we passed through a long dark passage to another door which

had a curtain or piece of carpet hung across it, shoving through which we found ourselves in a good sized room with a sloping ceiling running up to a point like the top of a tent.

“When I could begin a little to see about me, for the room was as full of thick smoke as any dense fog, I made out four people all smoking great pipes. Two of them were students, I knew, by their coloured caps and funny clothes ; then there was a Frenchman, for they always spoke to him in French, and I noticed that he didn't seem to understand them when the others talked German among themselves, and the other one had an awful lot of shaggy hair, like a regular mane, all over his shoulders, and he wore dark spectacles. Oh, but I forgot to tell you that once when I had stopped for breath upon the steep winding stairs, Mr. Gorles had particularly charged and warned me that when we got up among some friends of his, whom we should find where he was going to take me, I was to mind not to speak a word unless I was spoken to, to do just as I was told, and on no account to let them know that I understood German, but that he should tell them that I spoke and knew English only.

“Fancy what an awful crammer ! and that was not the only crammer he told, or made me tell for

him, which I could not somehow help, though I knew all the time how dreadfully wicked it was.

“When we had got into the room, ‘Hey, my friend,’ said the Frenchman, speaking what I suppose he would call English, ‘is it that you have with you there the infant of whom you have entertained us? Let us see him.’

“And they all shook me by the hand, and laughed, or rather grinned, like what our maid calls ‘Cheshire cats,’ at me, and slapped me on my back, and told me not to be afraid, though I held my tongue, and pretended not to understand what they said in German, just as Mr. Gorles had desired me.

“‘How old are you?’ they asked; but I didn’t answer, though of course I understood them well enough; which I could see, when they were talking quickly among themselves, Mr. Gorles could do but very little.

“There was one of the students who talked English quite perfectly, and I should have thought was an Englishman, if it had not been for his queer cut clothes and his long boots, and pointed beard and moustache; and besides he talked German amongst the others, quite as fast and as well as any of them; he asked me again—

“‘How old are you,’ he said, ‘my brave boy?’

“ ‘Twelve and three-quarters,’ I answered, for so I was then, though now I am regularly in my teens, you know.

“ ‘Oh, damn it!’ he said, in the very best English, quite naturally, just as Papa or you might, you know, ‘we don’t want a lad of twelve years old, we desire one entirely innocent, who knows nothing of guile or sin;’ and then, turning to his companions, he said in his own language, ‘Max, thinkest thou that at thirteen years, wanting three months, any innocency remained with thee? I wager not, nor yet with Monsieur Gustave, nor our revered friend the Professor, either at eleven, or ten, or even nine, was much innocency to be found;’ and they had a long talk, serious, and yet laughing among themselves, in which Mr. Gorles did his best to join, but the ‘mulls’ he made in the language were no end.

“But as he seemed to keep on protesting and explaining, the one who spoke English, and whom they called Von Lion, turned and asked me some more questions, and spoke to me about things I could not make out the meaning of; and, seeming to make nothing of me, they then all said that they could but try, or something to that effect.

“One of them then brought out of an old black-looking carved cabinet which stood back in a sort

of recess, what looked liked a great solid globe of glass, which he put in the middle of the table, which was in the centre of the room, and round which we were all standing, placing it very carefully upon a large block of wood or something square, covered over with a piece of black velvet, on the edges of which were all sorts of queer figures and topsy-turvy letters, like the things one sees on the big coloured bottles in doctors' shops.

“They then all put away their pipes, and turned down the lamp, which hung from the middle of the ceiling, and gave all the light there was, till, dark as it had been before, we could now only just make out each other, like so many shadows in the smoke, and there was a dead silence. After a little pause, they all knelt down most solemnly round the table. Mr. Gorles made me kneel down between himself and the other student (not the one who had been questioning me), who began, when we were all quite settled on our knees, to say, or rather sing out a droning sort of prayer, only it seemed to be in verse, very much like what I heard at the King's Catholic Kirche, when I went with mamma one day to hear the service there.

“At first I thought it was in German, but I couldn't make out any meaning in it, and afterwards began to

think it must be Latin, for some of the words were just like old Schultz, the usher at our school, pronounces Ovid and Virgil, which, when I repeat them at home, Papa always says are all wrong, and not a bit like what he ever learned for Latin.

“After this was over, they turned on a little more light, and, bringing me forward, spoke to me in a very solemn voice, desiring me to compose myself, and if I had any sort of wicked thoughts in my head,—which of course I had all the while, telling such a fib about not knowing German, besides being out from home at such a time without Papa or Mamma’s having an idea of it;—but what wicked thoughts I had I was to dismiss entirely, and to fix my eyes and my thoughts with all my mind on the glass ball, or crystal, I heard them say it was, and to tell them if I could see any things or persons in it.

“I looked ever so long, with all my might, but all I could see was the reflection of the lamp hanging over our heads, and my own and their faces topsy-turvy, and out of all shape, just as one does in a tablespoon, and that was all, though they all stood round quite still, and hardly breathing, seeming to expect that I should begin to see something else than what I have told you, but it was no use their expecting, as nothing came.

“Mr. Gorles, who had been very cross and snappish towards me all the evening, got very impatient, and said I was a stupid little fool for my pains; but Von Lion and the others, I suppose because they were strangers, were more civil, and told me not to mind, but that I should see beautiful things presently, if I wasn't afraid.

“Then, after another earnest talk together, they set me up in an old-fashioned high-backed chair, and the one they called the Professor, with the shaggy head, took off his green spectacles, and took hold of me by my two thumbs, quite gently, and desired me to look with all my might into his eyes, and most wonderful eyes they certainly were—they sparkled like lucifer matches, or like our black cat's do in the dark.

“He stared at me with these sparkling eyes, and I stared back with all my might at him.

“Presently he let go my thumbs, and began pawing with his lanky sort of claws of fingers in front of my face, closer and closer without quite touching me, which made my eyes feel sore and heavy, and I remember trying to look away, but found I couldn't; so there I had to sit staring at him, when I found my head begin to go round and round, and a noise of rushing in my ears, at first slow—whiz, whiz—and then gradually whiz, whiz-z-z-z-z, like a rail-

way train, rather a jolly sensation than not, and my eyes shut of their own accord, but the very instant they did so, the rummest thing was that I saw myself as if I was somebody else, looking on, distinctly in a bright flash of light. I could see the back of my own head, and all round the back of the big chair I was sitting in, and all the five others of them standing round, perfectly quiet, in the dim light, watching the strange man who was thus coming his dodges close to my nose. I could see my own face, and my own eyelids shut close, all in a single flash, as I say, as quick as thought, for I only shut my eyes for one minute, and opened them again directly; but when I did so it was as if I had awoke up from a deep sleep, and they had all moved and were gathered round me. The lamp was turned up, and the room was almost quite clear of smoke; some one had unfastened my collar, and they were fanning me with an atlas or some kind of large portfolio, and one was bathing my forehead and hands with cold water.

“I felt very queer, and inclined to be sick, which, however, soon went off; but what then astonished me most, though I have grown used to it since, was that the clock just opposite to me as I sat down in that chair pointed to nine exactly; and, just as one of them opened the window to let in some fresh air upon me, and I

was noticing the full moon shining brightly in over the roof of the houses and chimney pots, up amongst which we seemed to be, the great clock of the Frauen Kirche began booming out twelve, and then I heard the other bells in different directions strike the same ; and looking up to the clock in the room, sure enough, that had both hands at twelve also. I got up out of the big chair and went towards the open window, out of which while I was leaning, feeling very miserable and in an awful funk, thinking how I ever should get home again without being found out, and what a row there would be when I was missed, as I was sure I must have been long before this, I heard them in the room talking away again with all their might in German, whether or no I could ever have seen pictures of Frederic the Great, or Wallenstein, or Schiller, to have been able to describe them all so exactly as I had done : and two or three other names I had never mentioned and don't think I ever even heard of before.

“ This puzzled me, and I could not make out what they could be talking about exactly, because I had never tried even to describe anybody, or uttered a syllable about any of them.

“ Then they turned upon Mr. Gorles for saying I couldn't speak German, for that I had talked it the whole time as if I were a native.

“But he stuck to it still that I knew nothing but English, and that he had been perfectly astonished to hear me himself, which was, you know, a regular banger; though, as to my having talked German, that was only another as big, as I tell you I had never opened my mouth except to say that I could see nothing in the glass.

“But the shaggy-headed one, who had put on his spectacles again, made Mr. Gorles repeat his assertion, and seemed to think it very important, saying something about its being the proof of a certainly established though still disputed phenomenon (or some such stunning big word) in science.

“Then Mr. Gorles came across to me at the window and threatened, and entreated me to stick to it that I could only speak English, and not German; and I knew very well that I had not done so.

“When he joined them again, he seemed sulky and complaining about something they had refused, on which they turned upon him, and talked about debasing the noblest secrets of science to his trumpery views on a fräulein, on which he seemed to be very angry, and they only laughed and jeered at him.

“I felt altogether bewildered and puzzled, and was longing to get back home to my own little room, and yet dreading the consequences of having come out as

I had ; and at last, when I had shaken hands with them all, and the shock-headed man had stared at me again through his spectacles, and asked me if I would come again and have another game of staring with him, we got downstairs and on our way home. It was a bright moonlight night and we kept along the shady dark sides of the streets till Mr. Gorles, who, I told you, had all along been very sharp and disagreeable to me, stopped at the corner of one of the empty streets. There was not a soul to be seen in them ; only in the distance we could hear the clatter of carriages, I suppose coming home from the king's ball at the Schloss, which made me think what should I do if Papa and Mamma were to have come home before we got back.

“ Mr. Gorles stopped suddenly and turned my face round to the moonlight, which I suppose showed what a funk I was in, and said that I should not leave that spot until I had solemnly promised never to tell a living soul that I had been out with him as I had, or anything about what I had seen or done, or where I had spent the evening, not even if my absence was found out when we got home ; but that if I should make the promise he would manage to find sufficient excuses for me and get me out of the scrape ; but that if ever I dared tell, he said in a most dreadful voice—

that is, you know, it would have been most dreadful if it had not been rather squeaky—that as sure as the words passed my lips I should be struck down dead the very same instant for breaking my solemn oath. Only I never took the oath, you see, though he wanted me to do so ; I said I wouldn't, because I knew it was a dreadful sin to take oaths or swear ; mamma had told me so ; and he didn't even get the promise out of me as he wished, though he kept threatening and declaring that he should have a secret power over my life even if he were not near me, that is not even here at Dresden, but away, even as far as Paris or in England itself, it would be all the same ; but whether he meant to be down upon me through telegraph or not I cannot say.

“When we got to Lüttichau Strasse Mr. Gorles told me to wait at the corner while he went on to see if it was all right ; and there was I standing for ten or fifteen minutes all alone, and beginning to get dreadfully cold, and frightened too, at being left thus, at one o'clock in the morning, all by myself. I did not know but that there might be robbers, or even worse, perhaps ghosts, prowling about at that time.

“I was just making up my mind to come on in spite of all risks when I saw his figure skulking along, just like a cat, on the dark shadowy side of the

Strasse. He whispered that it was all right, and that my people had not yet returned from the ball; and sure enough when we got to our own house they were not, and the street door was unfastened.

“The Bernstoffs, who lived in the same house at that time, were also gone I knew to the ball at the Schloss, which I suppose was the reason of the front door being left open.

“And there was the private entrance of our apartments also ajar, and Harrison and mamma’s maid both snoring fast asleep in their chairs, with the lamp on the table gone out, though it seemed only just to have done so, as it was still smoking and smelt like anything.

“I could see quite plainly, for the moon was shining right in at the staircase windows: no one had touched the things at my door, so I knew no one had been in there, and didn’t I turn out the clothes-bag and nip into bed in less than winking.

“I don’t think I could have been there five minutes before they all came home. Mamma came in to look at me, but I pretended to be fast asleep.

“I almost thought she would have twiggged me when she leant down to give me a kiss. She cried out to nurse, who stood waiting at the door with a candle,

‘Why, bless the child, how cold he is; how long has he been to bed?’

“I only gave a snort and a turn, without opening my eyes, as nurse answered, ‘Oh, ever since nine o’clock, punctual, ma’am,’ which she couldn’t possibly have known, even if I had, as I knew very well that she and Clotilde had both gone across to old Mrs. Pidgers’s over the way, to tea, at half-past eight, the moment mamma’s back was turned.

“For though nurse Harrison is such a very faithful old servant, that mamma often says she may be trusted to any amount, she does tell most awful crammers sometimes.

“And so you see I never was found out; and not being questioned, run no risk of being struck dead for telling.

“When next day I met Mr. Gorles, he looked at me exactly as if nothing of all that I have been telling you had ever happened between us.

“As soon as I was alone with him, which, as I noticed, he seemed not to wish to be, I tried to say something confidential-like about our mysterious adventures together of the evening before.

“I had had time by then to think over, and consider that all I had been through had in it something

mysterious and wonderful ; it began to seem to be some unknown sort of awfully horrible wickedness.

“ But he only looked as if he could not the least understand what on earth I was talking about.

“ But when I persisted, and went on to speak about the garret, and the strange party we had met there, and the crystal, and the odd effect their tricks had had on myself (though there my ideas were the most confused), and also the dreadful threats he had held over me on our way home through the empty streets, he still kept up a look of astonishment, and seemed bewildered, and stoutly declared I must have dreamt every word of it ; and that I was going to have brain fever, and wanted some medicine.

“ Now though I may be young and green, I was not going to be done entirely in that way, so I said, ‘ Oh, very well, if it is only all a dream I shall go and tell it all to my Papa and my Mamma, and see what they think of it.’

“ Then you should just have seen his face, when I said that I should tell them how I had dreamt that he had threatened to strike me down dead.

“ He answered, that as for that, if I ever dared tell anybody that story, or even alluded to such a thing, that he had no doubt it would really happen to me ; and then he said I must remember about Joseph in

the book of Genesis, how he sometimes had queer dreams, which, though they were dreams, yet all meant something, and came to pass; and so in my case there was no reason that a special trial for my young soul might not have been sent from Heaven, and that after so solemn a warning as I described, that if I did dare to divulge all that appeared to have happened to me, I should more than probably be really struck down, and in his opinion served right too, for not taking proper warning.

“And his look at me, as he said this, was so dreadful that I feel quite sure that, though he might wish me to forget, and try to persuade me out of my own broad awake senses, he meant at the same time to impress his threats on my mind as deeply as he could. Since that, and at times pretending to put on his old kind manner, which, as I told you, he had entirely dropped that night, but still keeping up his humbug about knowing nothing about it, he talked me into describing what that shaggy-headed man did to me *in my dream*, as he would always call it, though, of course, he knew better: and made me tell him what my own feelings were under the strange treatment, and so gradually got on, to my letting him try the same dodges himself, just as he said at first, for fun, and to show me what fancy it all was; and so having once begun, he has often done

it since when we have been alone, and now he can put me sound to sleep, whenever he likes, in two minutes or less, merely by fixing his eyes upon me, and waving his hands half-a-dozen times over my face.

“On the whole, I have come to think it rather pleasant than not, except that when I wake I feel so dreadfully weary and tired, just as if I had been for a tremendous long run, instead of fast asleep on his sofa for ever so long, as I can tell by seeing how the clock has gone, though, like the first time on that strange night, I have only seemed to shut my eyes and open them again the same instant.

“Though I had left off liking and caring for Mr. Gorles as I used to do, I cannot tell you how strongly and how constantly I have caught myself longing to be with him, and have often seemed, without any one to tell me, to know when he was coming, and somehow, as if drawn towards him, and in spite of myself, obliged to obey and comply with him in everything.

“Indeed it is all very fine, cousin Frank,” concluded the poor lad, suddenly changing his note from the most plaintive depths to the highest indignation, “for you to pitch into me about that hair of Katie’s, or the giving her the letter, which I knew the moment I touched it must have come from him, but I should like to see even you, big as you are, try to disobey

him, if he had only once got the same wonderful power over you."

"Humph!" was all I said in reply to the boy, for I did not care to let him know exactly what my own private thoughts were upon all that he had been telling me.

CHAPTER XV.

COLONEL DE LORME FORBIDS HIS NEPHEW HIS
HOUSE.

ON reaching the De Lormes' house I left the boy with a kinder shake of the hand than I think he had ever yet had from me, which seemed to gratify, though rather surprise the young beggar, whom I then for the first time, though he really was my own blood relation, found myself taking a sort of kindly interest in, and discovering to have perhaps a warm-hearted, excitable sort of nature, on which such deep impressions as he had been describing might be easily made. But how far had the same sort of impressions been tried or succeeded on his sister I thought with a chill, which seemed to make my very skin shrivel up too tight for me, as I turned away towards my own lodgings. I had inquired at the door, and hearing that Katie was still too unwell to appear in the drawing-room, like an idiot, as I thought myself afterwards, instead of going up as usual, to spend my evening with my uncle and aunt, walked home to the solitude of my own den,

which was what I had not done for many weeks past.

But I longed to get away alone, to turn well over in my mind the extraordinary account the boy had given me, and really consider whether I could not devise some way of thwarting and avoiding the influence, which, though in what exact manner I could hardly define, yet still I had a distinct presentiment, was closely hanging over Katie's and my own immediate destinies.

Yes, it certainly was idiotic and bad policy on my part to walk off as I did that evening, because Katie was not to be found sitting in the drawing-room, as she had always been accustomed to do when well and all right, because I have thought since it must have first given occasion to my uncle and aunt to take notice, and form certain conjectures which were, however, inevitable, and must have come sooner or later, though, of course, the longer a disagreeable crisis is postponed, the better one always fancies it to be.

The next day, and the day after that, I paid my usual visit at about my usual time in as natural and unconcerned a manner as I could assume.

Katie was still reported as unable to leave her room, though I could not elicit at all from what cause she was supposed to be suffering.

I did not like to appear too particular or urgent in my inquiries after her, though I think they must have themselves perceived the deep anxiety and mental distress I was enduring.

Though still kind and cordial when I went in to pass my evenings with them, as I have told you had become my recognised and established habit, there was something (though even to myself I could hardly define it) of change in the manner of both the Colonel and my aunt; they seemed as if they were almost more sorry than angry with me, but still there was a sort of chill about them both.

I did not care to show any difference in my manner in return, even if my heart, yearning as it was for some comfort, or the vaguest chance of seeing her, had not kept me hovering about the place, because I hoped it would all blow over, and I did not wish to appear a huffy fool and ungrateful after all the kindness I had received from them; but still though they, on their part, did not seem to like in plain terms to hint at such a thing, I began to be painfully aware that they would not be sorry if I did not pay my evening visit perhaps quite so regularly, and as a matter of course, as heretofore. In short, though I could not tell how or why exactly, I began to feel that the footing I was on with them was becoming uncomfortable: and so it

went on until one Sunday, when going down immediately after morning church to at least inquire, if not go in, which, goodness knows, except for the reasons I have just told you, was become anything but pleasant as it used to be, at the door I met Harrison, the nurse, with whom I had always been on rather cheery, nod-my-head sort of terms, as I was constantly going in and out.

That day she looked quite gloomily, I might almost say savagely at me, as she answered my eager inquiries after Katie.

"Miss De Lorme," she told me, "was quite as bad as need's be, and had been delirious and screaming frantie-like all night, if that was any gratification to them as has been the cause of all this to know."

I could see, before I asked, the trouble, anxiety, and grief which were weighing down the Colonel, whom I found upstairs in the sitting-room alone, with no attempt at occupation besides his own sad thoughts.

Instead of the kindly smile and word of welcome, which I had always till lately received when I entered, he rose from his chair, and making me the stiffest of inclinations, begged me in formal terms to be so good as to take a seat, as he had to request the honour of a very serious conversation with me, at the same time laying some large sheets of paper and freshly prepared

pens on the table before him. He went on to say, that he thought it right to inform me that he felt it necessary to commit what might pass between us fully to writing for future reference, if required. His whole manner and deportment were so ultra-military and sublime, that I suppose, according to the old adage which you of course know, it must have been within a hair's breadth of bordering on that one step further. Anyhow, miserable, anxious, and if the truth must be told, half-frightened as for the moment I felt, yet it was all I could do to keep from bursting out into a laugh.

I fancy my sensations were very much in that indescribable sort of mixed-up state, which the women-kind are subject to when they enjoy themselves in a fit of "high strikes," as Mrs. Harrison, I remember, (not about me though) one day calling them.

I gulped down the rising inclination, however, and was glad I could do so, but thinking the wisest way was not to give in to such formal absurdities, but just to take the bull by the horns at once—"Come, my dear uncle," I said, "what is the matter? and why are you so put out and angry with me? It has added to the wretchedness which I have already suffered—which I am sure we have all cause enough to suffer—to see as I have for these last few days, that there is something;

and I would much sooner have the row, if there is to be one, out at once, like a man, and know how I have offended you, than go on in this unsatisfactory, uncomfortable manner, for I am quite sure that if I have given you any just cause for offence, it has been totally unintentional on my part; so please let me know the worst, and at once plainly say on."

The old gentleman gave me a queer look, as if half inclined to resent my plain spoken way of disposing of what he had, I fancy, been all that morning, or perhaps longer, rehearsing in his own mind with all the preliminaries of a domestic court-martial; but his own good sense prevailed, and he was, after all, a sensible old buffer at bottom, though I had by that time found him out as apt to get crochets into his head now and then; so, changing to a more conventional every-day style of address than that in which he had begun, he said—"Well then, Frank, my boy, tell me at once, candidly, can you account for this strange and sudden illness of my dear daughter's? Have you been saying or telling her anything which can have caused her any shock, or sudden effect on her nerves? In short, in any way explain the distressing, even dangerous state she has been in ever since you and she returned home that Tuesday evening from a late walk?"

"She complained that evening, as soon as she came

in ; but your aunt and myself thought no more of it at first, than that you had imprudently induced her to overtax her strength, and I told my wife at the time, that for that, as well as, perhaps, other reasons which had occurred to me, I had begun to think those very long walks had better, perhaps, be for the future discontinued, but trusting that by next morning, or at least in a day or two, Katie would be herself all right again.

“ So far from that, however, I am sorry to say, and as you are, I suppose, aware, she has been growing worse and worse, until, last evening, from a state of partial stupor, she became positively light-headed, and has been screaming in delirium the whole night through ; and as she cries out again and again, the poor child continues to couple your name in a most disagreeable, I may say a most horrible way with that of the little former comrade of yours, you know whom I mean ; and from some of the broken exclamations and disjointed sentences, which betray the thoughts and ideas which are now boiling and seething through her poor wandering brain, I am only more sorry than I can express, that I have more than convincing proof that you, Frank Lambard, have broken your most solemn promise to me, and that your word of honour is worthless, and not to be trusted.”

I was perfectly staggered, and actually could not get out a syllable, before he went on again, solemnly.

“Frank Lambard, your father is the oldest and dearest friend I ever had in this world, although it is now some years since we have met; he was always the strictest lover of truth, and the most honourable man, the most scrupulous in small matters as well as great, that I ever knew or heard of; judging you—his son—as I thought you would be worthy to be, and could be judged, by his high standard, do you remember my telling you how indignant I had been at hearing a disgraceful story, which was told against your character, repeated in my presence, even before you yourself had had an opportunity of declaring it to be a false and wicked slander, as I *then* was convinced it was? I mention that, because it was at that very time that you made me the most solemn promise never to repeat to either of my children, but especially to my daughter, a most absurd and impossible romance to which you had, I grant you, quite seriously, and as if you yourself really believed it, tried to make me listen.

“It was not without very particular and most serious reasons of my own that I demanded that promise of you, though I felt that I was giving an undue importance to such rubbish as it was.

“And how have you kept that promise? I am sorry that I can now never again have the same confidence in you, and painful as it is to have to say such a thing to the son of my oldest friend and comrade, as well as my wife’s own nephew, I must henceforth beg to retract the general invitation we were so glad to offer you, to be constantly with us, and must beg for the future to forbid you from any further intimacy with our children while you remain in this place.

“Of course you can stay on here at Dresden as you may think fit, and as long as we thought, and had no reason for doubting, that we might thoroughly trust you, we were only too glad to see as much as possible of you. But that footing must now come to an end.”

This was really too much; in the most earnest terms I could command, I protested and swore to my uncle that I had kept my promise, and had been true to my word.

So earnestly that, as a gentleman, he professed himself bound to believe me, though I could see that, in spite of his professions, he was sorely perplexed as to what he was to make of, and how possibly to reconcile my strong and reiterated denial, with some equally convincing proof which he seemed to think that he had to the contrary.

It was while he still remained silent, as if trying to balance these totally adverse difficulties in his own mind, that, although the door was closed, and there was a tolerably-sized apartment intervening between that in which we were, and Katie's own room beyond, suddenly a piercing scream—a thrilling cry, as if of agony—reached us.

“Come as far as her door yourself, and then you may learn the grounds of my doubts and accusations,” said the Colonel, sternly; “and then, sir, let us see whether you can, with the same unblushing confidence, stick to your denial.”

The door of the inner room was ajar; as it had, I suppose, been left by my aunt, who had rushed in to Katie, on hearing the same loud cry with which we had been so greatly startled, so that, without quite seeing into the room itself, we could distinctly hear the voice of the poor girl, as her cries sometimes rose to an appalling height, and then again, in broken and disjointed sentences and articulations, became lowered to a moaning whisper.

“Save him! oh, save him! Oh, if you will only spare Frank, I will give my life, my soul, everything I have in the world to save him!”

And so she would go on, repeating over and over again; then of a sudden she changed to more inco-

herent ravings, though always harping on the same wild idea of some tremendous danger impending on me.

“Oh, Mr. Gorles! Mr. Gorles! Mr. Gorles! Spare him, oh, pray spare my poor Frank! I will serve you, I will slave for you, I will follow you wherever you wish, if you will only spare Frank, and not drag him down, down, down with you below there,” and then she would begin all over again.

“Yes, my very life, my soul, if you will not hurt him! But Frank and I shall never, never, never be the same with each other again!”

Then her voice gradually quieted off into a low, running moan of “Never, never, never again the same.”

It was the most awfully painful thing to hear, most perfectly heart-rending. Of course, I could not hope to be allowed to go in to see her, though how I longed and how much my very soul quite ached to be allowed to do so no one can tell.

All of a sudden, as I stood there overwhelmed with grief, and my head pressed tightly against the wall, I cannot tell why, but I felt an almost insuperable desire to turn round upon my uncle as he was leaning on the other side quite choking with sobs of agony, poor old fellow! to seize him by the throat and knock his head against the door-post; the longing to do so was so intense, that it required a positively strong mental

struggle and effort to subdue the feeling while it lasted.

When curiously enough pat to my very thoughts, wild and evil as they were, poor Katie again began from low moaning to rave at the top of her voice.

“No, no, no, you will never make him do that, wicked as you are, and great as your horrible power may be over him, you will never make him raise his hand against my father !”

Now, was not that a most wonderful coincidence ? it struck me all of a heap at the moment, and often and often have I thought of it ever since. However, instead of yielding to the devilish impulses I had felt working within me, I took upon myself gently to lead the poor old gentleman away, and we went and sat down in quite the farthest window of the farther room, having shut close all the doors behind us, as far as possible out of hearing of the sad and dreadful sound.

“Frank, my dear boy,” said he again after some minutes’ silence, “you have now heard for yourself, and your aunt tells me that all through last night, indeed I heard her myself while I was there, that our poor child’s thoughts were wandering, and that she was crying out in the same way that you have just now listened to, about a lock of hair she has parted with.

“You must give me back that hair, for even if she recovers and is in mercy spared to us, anything of that sort;—you know, of course, what I mean—any engagement between you and her is utterly and absolutely out of the question; rather than that should happen I would see my child lying a corpse upon that bed on which she is now tossing.

“You must give me up that piece of hair, if you please, here at once.”

“Uncle, I have never asked for and never received anything of the sort from Katie, though if she had not been so suddenly taken ill that evening as she was, I might perhaps have hoped —— but I cannot give you up what I have never had.”

“Sir,” he replied, “it is too horrible thus to be obliged to doubt the word of anybody, but it is now a question between either your truth or my own senses.

“Which am I to credit? Do you think I am——” and he stopped himself; “do you think I am a downright fool? What am I to believe and think from the way and wild words in which you yourself have just now heard that poor girl coupling your name with Gorles, dreaming, as she evidently is, and raving in her distracted fancies on the imaginary affinity between him and yourself? From whom but yourself alone could that idea have ever entered her young

head?—you yourself told me that no one else ever knew it;—and now as to this lock of hair, which you in an equally barefaced manner deny.”

“Then call me a liar at once, sir!” I said, springing up. I was indignant at being thus disbelieved, and again I felt the awful inward impulse to rush at him with the chair in my hand, or any other heavy implement I could have laid hold of in my wrath, to crush him to the ground and there trample on him. I felt I should have liked to have sucked, yes, and licked up his very blood.

My own seemed on fire, as if in another minute it would boil and seethe over so as to pour out of my eyes and ears or come oozing out of my very finger ends. Thank heaven, the horrible feeling was but momentary!

Though a fine up-standing old fellow as he was, tall, hearty as myself, and a soldier every inch of him, I really think he was scared at my wild appearance, and hardly knew what to expect.

Though, as I say, thank heaven, I checked myself in time, perhaps it was because the thought then first struck me of his extraordinary likeness to his daughter Katie as she had looked when at the top of that Wolfshügel mount; so as he faced me, gazing sternly at me, holding himself proudly up to his full

height, I began to feel abashed and ashamed of myself.

“I beg your pardon, Uncle George, but from any other man in the world——” He held out his hand to me, and said quietly and kindly, “I must, and I will try to believe in your truth, my boy, and doubt my own senses, but God only knows how to account for it;” and I remarked the same strange, half-searching, half-pitying expression in his countenance I have mentioned once before, when he asked me that odd question about my grandfather.

“Uncle,” said I, “if in spite of yourself you cannot believe me, and though again I solemnly swear to you that I have told you nothing but the truth, I suppose you cannot, and there is no help for it; but depend upon it that although you before chose so utterly and entirely to scout the idea of influences, *supernatural and unaccountable influences*, which I could bear testimony to from my own painful experience, but of which you were so incredulous, and even quite angry with me for asserting,—though I have strictly kept my promise to you, and never once come near the subject to Katie—yet you may depend upon it that the same sort of power has been at work here, and is at work now, and so some day you will find it——”

“Silence, boy!” he cried, “silence, I command you!”

and again he glared with his stern look fully upon me, "and never dare mention such utter nonsense in my presence again."

Well, Uncle as he was (by marriage at least), and kind as he really had been to me, that was rather more than I was prepared to put up with ; so, taking up my hat, and with a sort of formal bow of adieu at the door, I just "made tracks;" my indignation determining me never to set foot within that house again, unless I received an ample apology for the insults I had undergone : yet all the while longing to lay myself down like a dog at the door where that poor child was raving on her sick bed within.

CHAPTER XVI.

TARAXACUM.

BLANK enough, as you may imagine, was the state of mind in which I started, I neither knew nor cared whither exactly, from the house in Lüttichau Strasse, after the scene I have described to you; when whom should I run against, or rather be overtaken by, but that strange fellow Lyons, whom I daresay you may remember at Eton—Lyons, at Evans's—or *De Lyons* rather, he became by royal patent while he was there—(why on earth people should consider it a swell thing to stick on a little French part of speech, pronoun, preposition, which is it? to their proper names, I cannot think)—but at school he more generally went by the name of "*Taraxacum*," which I have always looked upon as the best-originated nickname on record.

His sponsor at his baptism having bestowed upon him the name of Daniel, it was a matter of course that he should immediately, upon assuming the afore-said aristocratic prefix to his name, be called *Dan-de-*

lion. The joke was too palpable to escape the most infantine capacity ; but when some fellow looking out some hard word in his lexicon, hit upon the Greek name for that humble weed, great was his triumph among jokers ; as, saluting our friend as *Taraxacum*, on the spot, the name clung to him from that moment, ever thereafter to be associated with his memory in the minds of his school contemporaries.

He was always one of the queerest, most original fellows I ever knew (one summer half he was in my boat, and so, though at different houses, and in different removes, he and I were thrown rather thickly together). He was as a boy a wild, restless, dare-devil sort of character, up to any sort of mischief, or any lark—but also devoted to experiments in natural philosophy, and those sort of games. He used to galvanize dead frogs and rats, and nearly killed one of the maids at his dame's by fixing an awfully over-charged electric wire to his door-handle ; indeed I am not sure that it was not for that very feat, or else for slaying and anatomizing his dame's favourite cat, in his zealous pursuit of science, that his Eton career came to an untimely end.

“ Both causes were, I remember, at the time alleged—anyhow he left suddenly under some difficulty of the sort, and when I met him again, I recalled the fact of

having heard that he had gone to Heidelberg, or Bonn, or one of those German universities.

When I first fell in with him at Dresden, it was at the fencing-school, which I have, as I think, already mentioned to you. I certainly should never have recognised my ancient friend, and did not, even when he rapturously hailed me by my name, until he told me himself that he was the original '*Taraxacum*' Lyons. He had so thoroughly contrived to transmogrify his essentially British countenance into the most ultra-German of German students, with his long pointed moustache and chin-piece, rum little coloured cap, coatee cut off short behind, like a singed cock-sparrow, and his nose stuck on with long straps of sticking-plaster, all complete.

"Holloa! Lambard!" he hailed me then, again on this occasion coming up from behind in Lüttichau Strasse, and hooking on to my arm. "Why, bless my stars! do you know the family who live in that house, out of which I saw you just now coming? Oh, most fortunate of youths! oh, you lucky dog! how did you manage it?—that is where the prettiest girl in all Dresden lives. I have myself been beating about the bush these months past to get an introduction there, but never could contrive it anyhow; but now at last will fortune favour the most patient of her hangers-on,

(I mean of fortune's, not the young lady's), inasmuch as she has thus put it into the power of you, my ancient school-fellow and friend, to serve your most obedient; and by a timely introduction to your respected acquaintance not only to allow him personally to establish a friendly footing where his heart has for some time prospectively settled itself; but also have yourself the happiness of feeling that you have rescued one of the once merry companions of your boyhood's joyous days from despair, the fatal consequences of which would, but for this your welcome aid, be hard-pressing and inevitable."

"You need not go on in that style," I said, quietly, but rather sternly; "I am myself not in the humour for it now; the young lady you allude to happens at this moment to be very dangerously ill; and even if that were not the case, her family are not particularly anxious to increase their acquaintance by receiving every fresh comer who may take it into his head to wish for an introduction to them."

"Well, there, don't cut up so rough, old fellow," he answered, quite imperturbably; "if you wont, you wont; but as to their being so inaccessible, I only know there was an audacious little vagabond here before you came, named Gorles—why, by-the-bye, you

knew him well enough yourself—of course you did, that little dwarf fellow who was at your own tutor's at Eton, and swamped our boat for us against Windsor Bridge that time he came down as sitter, and you and I were swished together next morning with the rest of the crew, for being drunk, which we were not;—why, of course you must remember him well enough: well, when he was here he managed to insinuate himself into an intimacy in that quarter: how he originally began I never could make out—by some fluke, I suppose; while (just like my luck) though I have continually planned all sorts of dodges, I never could get a chance.

“At one time I thought I was going to do it by making friends with the young one, the school-boy; but Gorles, who was always as jealous as a stoat, had him so thoroughly under his thumb, body and soul, I found that it was no go.

“Joking apart, I think you might take pity upon a poor fellow who has so long been desperately in love, as I have been, most honourably too,—all correct, you know, honour bright; and you need not be afraid of my disgracing your introduction, for when I am in decent society I can behave myself as well as anybody I know, at a pinch. Well, there, I wont ask any more; but, seriously, my dear Lambard, if you are

such a real friend of the family, you ought to keep a sharp look out on Master Gorles, going on as he does with that young boy ; and though I say it, with all respect, on his pretty sister too, for now he is come back to Dresden——”

“Is Gorles now here in Dresden ?” I cut in sharply, interrupting him ; “by Jove, tell me where I can find him. But in the meantime allow me, De Lyons, to acquaint you with a fact of which you seem not to have the slightest idea, that the young lady you speak of so glibly, in fact the family from whose door you saw me coming out, are among the nearest relations I have ; and *àpropos* to your very unwelcome remarks, I think it fair to tell you that I have already received some intimation from that boy, who is my own first cousin, of some very strange scenes in which, as it now occurs to me from his description, you yourself, as well as Gorles, have taken a rather prominent part, and of which you can now, perhaps, give me some further explanation.”

“Your own first cousin ! Oh, by the tombs of my forefathers, you don’t mean it ! Whew !” he whistled out a series of notes of admiration ; “then I can tell you, my dear Lambard, that it is a devilish lucky thing you are here, just in time. Your own first cousins ! And that beautiful girl, too !”

He very naturally jumped at that conclusion, on which, of course, it was no business of mine to undeceive him.

“Then I will just tell you what it is, Lambard: though you may, I daresay, think me rather a rum chap, I have liked you from the first day I knew you, and you elected me into your boat at Eton; and though it was for so long that we did not happen to run against one another, I was, upon my word, quite deuced glad to see you again, when we met so unexpectedly; in short, though you just now seemed disinclined to act like a man and a brother, that is, an old schoolfellow, to me when I suggested as much, I will yet return good for evil, and just give you a friendly hint.

“That Master Gorles has been trying it on pretty considerably in that quarter; and, indeed, I may tell you further, in confidence, has come back here to Dresden, only three or four days since, for the express purpose of even further trying on what, even before I knew that they were your relations, or that any friend of mine happened to have such special interest in the matter, had struck me as carrying things to much greater lengths than any circumstances can possibly justify.

“Indeed, I have already suffered no small trouble

from qualms of conscience on the subject, although we all know that in the deep researches of science one cannot afford to be too particular about the private feelings of the patients on whom we experimentalize, and establish our theories; but still when it comes to beguiling a young boy out at night from his parents' roof, or inducing by whatever means, whether scientific or otherwise, any well brought up young lady to come alone, and unprotected to the rooms of any single man, and that man a stranger—although not happening ever to have had a sister of my own, in which case I might, perhaps, have been a better judge in such matters than I can now pretend to be—still, I say that I think, even in the cause of science, it is carrying matters a little too far.”

“What do you mean?” I gasped. “What do you dare to insinuate?”—and I only wonder that I did not then and there knock him head over heels, without giving him time for any further explanation.

“Oh,” he said, “it has never yet happened—that is to the young lady, at least—though I know the idea has been discussed and intended; and the little boy, who seems to have let you into the secret—I wonder he dared—was not hurt or even frightened by the experiments we had with him—he is a plucky young beggar, and awful saucy, I suspect. Still, though I

myself was there, I am sure I felt all the time that it was not altogether quite right; and as to further lengths, I have even before, as I say, I knew that you, my friend, were so interested in the matter, made up my mind to take no active part, though I could hardly know how to prevent them. Besides, to tell the honest truth, even if I thought there was any use in my interfering—which there would not be—I do not want just at this particular time to quarrel with the parties concerned, who meet together in pursuit of science—as the Professor, who is our leading spirit, has promised us a *séance*, and actually a Personal interview with the—— Well, with a very great personage, whom it is as well perhaps not to name, but who, if he can really be induced to come, why, I should like of all things to be present at the interview. The Professor declares that it is possible, and that, with common prudence, there is nothing to fear in the experiment; and I can only say that, though very wonderful, he has always hitherto been as good as his word, and performed all that he has undertaken—though, as I have seen myself, there have been already some very strange and startling things occasionally amongst his undertakings.

“I do not know, but perhaps if you would like very much to see him too, I might get the Professor’s

leave to bring you with me. It will be an opportunity you may never have again, and an event you will probably remember for the rest of your life; the only thing is, as he tells us, to be very civil but firm—that is, to show no sort of fear or agitation during the necessary forms or ceremony of invitation, and while he is actually present—and I know you have pluck enough, if any one in this world has, to face him——We wont, as I said, mention names, but I suppose you can guess who I mean?’

CHAPTER XVII.

DE LYONS AND HIS SCIENTIFIC FRIENDS.

STRUCK as I was with an evident vein of serious meaning beneath all this wild talk, coupled with and corroborative as it was to my mind of all that I had heard from young Ferdy; it occurred to me that by making up to this strange genius I might gain admittance for myself into the clique of these scientifics, spiritualists, or whatever they called themselves, and thus stand a better chance of confronting, if not defeating, little Gorles in his machinations, or at any rate, by my mere presence, of preventing his even attempting any of his tricks. Yet all the while I could not, as I have told you, have defined exactly in my own mind, what it was that I thus dreaded and expected.

Acting then on this idea, and having invited "*Taraxacum*" into my lodgings, at the door of which we had for some time been carrying on our interesting conversation; and finding my friend confidentially enough inclined, I took upon myself to inquire how

on earth he had originally contrived to get himself mixed up with such a queer set of fellows. Upon which he, without the slightest reserve, gave a full account of himself and his chosen companions.

“You see,” said he, “the fact is, that even as a boy I was always fond of experimental philosophy, chemistry, physical science, and addicted to dabbling to any extent in those sort of pursuits ; and so having fallen in with a genial spirit or two among the students at our university, when I first joined that respectable institution, I brought letters of introduction last year when I visited Leipsic to Professor Zauber, who was then lecturing at that city. There is scarcely, I believe, a city or town in Europe in which he has not lectured and given public *séances*—from many of which, Rome, Naples, Petersburg, and I rather believe Paris, he has had short notice to quit in consequence ;—and constant correspondents he has all over the world. Well, besides being, as I now tell you, myself really much interested in those deep sciences to which the Professor is specially devoted, it was chiefly through his recommendation that I became appointed foreign correspondent to those eminently spiritualistic journals, the ‘ Penny Sunday Medium,’ and the ‘ Biologist’s Weekly Magazine.’ Contributing besides occasionally to other

leading scientific papers and periodicals in London, I am obliged to keep myself constantly *au fait* upon all the most interesting metaphysical facts, which from my friendship with the Professor I enjoy constant opportunities of witnessing: the fact is that I originally began by supplying my weekly budget with many anecdotes and embellishments of my own invention; but as I seriously went into the matter I soon discovered that there was no need of any such dishonest demands upon my imagination, as the actual facts and results of experiments I have myself witnessed, and assisted in, far exceed in wonder any inventions I should ever have dared to venture upon, or until I really had myself seen them, ever had an idea of.

“A fellow must live, you know, and though it may perhaps seem rather a low form for an Etonian to become a ‘penny-a-liner’ before he is turned two-and-twenty, yet I have already met one or two of our old school-fellows lower down in their luck, even than myself. A stoker on a Belgian railway engine, and a marker at a Frankfort billiard-room, are, I flatter myself, a peg or two below contributing to the diffusion of great scientific truths, which may before long command the attention of the most learned and renowned societies in Europe, leading probably to

some of the deepest discoveries of Creation and Nature ever as yet unrolled."

" 'Hear! hear!' I cried, though I didn't laugh or sneer at him, as you, sir, do at me if a little extra enthusiastic.

"I have," he continued, "unfortunately come to a slight difference of opinion with my governor, a worthy man in his way, but not always reasonable, and, he having in a very mean way thought fit to stop the supplies, I am forced to the truly despicable condition of trying to earn my own living somehow. My temporary difficulty with the home department is the principal reason of my spending my vacation in this place instead of in the parsonage house of Bramton, in the county of Wilts, as I ought naturally to be doing, if the rector there was only a more dutiful parent.

"I find it more convenient to go about in this queer toggery, which I know you do not altogether admire, for I have before now noticed you eyeing me over; but I have three or four very good reasons for doing so, in which I think you will agree when you hear them.

"To begin with, I have just now, as it happens, got nothing to wear, and though the natives here are barbarians it is true, yet they would I fear hardly recognise the true primæval dignity of nature in its purity, more than would be the case even at home in

London, supposing the climate allowed of any such unpretending simplicity of costume.

“ Besides that, I have often found this style of ‘get up’ to be an advantage in falling in with and making acquaintance with travelling compatriots, which I like doing sometimes, particularly if I happen to notice any nice-looking girls in the party, by stepping gracefully forward and volunteering my humble services as interpreter in any little difficulty they may have incurred from their deficiency in the language.

“ On such occasions, you see, the German student and romantic stranger is received with pleasure and gratitude ; when if they only suspected that he was only an Englishman out of luck, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he would be snubbed and looked upon with suspicion as an impudent intruder.

“ But passing as I do for a genuine native it is astonishing how my polite advances are received, and many a good dinner and pleasant evening have I enjoyed both here in Dresden and in other cities with charming people on whom I never set eyes before or since.

“ It is such fun to be complimented upon the astonishing correctness of one’s English, which I take care when I think of it, to intersperse with an occasional dash of German expressions or idiom ; and the warm

invitations I have received to various country houses, whenever I shall find my way to England, would I am sure if properly arranged keep me going on the fat of the land for a twelve month or two.

“I mean some day to pick up a travelling heiress, in return for whose consols or broad acres I can bestow my title and coronet, and so make the lucky fair one, whoever she may be, the proudest and happiest of women as Graffen, or I am not sure it shall not be Princess, von der Löwe.”

“Why don’t you make it Von Taraxacum at once?”
I could not resist saying.

“Well, that is not a bad idea. Der Graffe von Taraxacum, with my crest of a yawning lion over it, would look stunning on a glazed card, wouldn’t it?”

“But to return to our select little society, or rather clique, now that I have given you this full account of my most humble self. Charlatans or humbugs you may, like many others who know nothing about the matter, consider us; but I am very sure that if once you come to see and take an interest in the marvellous secrets and facts of nature which are the result of our studies and practical experiments, I defy you to leave off, even though you may, as I have, occasional qualms as to whether it is all right and lawful, or not perhaps running a trifling risk of putting yourself immediately

into the power of a certain person, of whom the less we talk the better ; but once fairly launched in these marvellous pursuits of science, even such qualms (which I find lessen a good deal as one becomes more used to them), will not stop one from eagerly seeking to learn more and more of the vast powers and strange truths thus revealed to those who boldly go in for them. Then there is the Professor who, for one half he knows and can do, would a hundred years since in the days of ignorance, have been tortured and burnt for a wizard.

“ The next is a Frenchman, one Gustave Kanard, who by the same token knows you, and swears you once saved his life for him at Cambridge. How very oddly things come round ! He was talking about you, and quoting you as an extraordinary specimen of animal strength and courage, only last night, and just the very fellow we wanted for a certain extraordinary purpose ; when Gorles, who, as it now strikes me, seemed very much put out at hearing you were still here, chose to pooh-pooh Frenchy, and even hinting that you were no better than a coward, said that as to your strength he had the best of reasons for knowing all about that, and that he had himself once fought and licked you at school ; at which we all laughed most awfully, as well me might, till the little dwarf became

as savage as a cat in a coal-hole. Besides these, there is a fellow student of mine, Max Sniffel, who like myself, goes in for any sort of science, though alchemy is what his notions chiefly run upon.

“We five are all that are here in Dresden at present, though there are three or four others who keep up a correspondence with us, and occasionally attend our meetings if they happen to be passing through, or staying here for a short time as they sometimes may chance to be.

“As to Gorles, whom I can see by your face when I mentioned his name, you do not love much more than we do;—he is still just as bumptious and disagreeable as he always was when an Eton fellow, and therefore we would just as soon he kept himself away from our little meetings, were it not that the Professor declares that, though like every one else, he personally dislikes him, his presence and help are of great value to us, as he is more naturally endowed with unusually vast powers of the *odyle* and magnetic forces than anybody he has ever yet met with. He tells us that to his own personal knowledge, Gorles’s mother, who was well known in her day to the then very few followers of Mesmer and M. Cazotte, the famous Parisian clairvoyant, as an extraordinary spiritual medium, ran away from her lawful husband, who

was an honest, unsuspecting conveyancer—or in some such line of business—with a Polish refugee, a very queer character, who was at one time a good deal received in society in London, although he was commonly reported to be a ‘Vampire.’ Of that *faux pas* our little friend was the result—such may or may not be really the case, but the Professor, though he sometimes announces the most extraordinary facts, generally knows what he is talking about. Anyhow he cultivates Gorles, and hopes through him to bring about that friendly, therefore quite harmless, interview with the great and terrible personage *in propria persona* whom I have already hinted at. Indeed, if you must know, it was while discussing that very matter, that your own name and character came upon the *tapis* as having it in your power, if you would only consent, to be of most immense assistance to us.”

“Thank you very much for the association,” I replied; “but in what way, may I ask, am I likely to contribute to the success of your satanic *réunion*?”

“Hush!” said *Taraxacum*, glancing round him with a scared look, “never mention names! How can you be so dreadfully indiscreet?”

“Why, the way we came to be talking about you was in this wise: the Professor, whether out of some

of those old worm-eaten manuscripts and black-letter folios he is always pouring over, or whether he may have hit upon it by his own wonderfully acute powers of thought and reasoning, I am not sure, but somehow or other he has arrived at a conclusion satisfactory to his own mind, on which he has founded a, as I believe, hitherto undiscovered or certainly long-forgotten theory—not wholly dissimilar, but going far beyond the doctrines of Salverte, and other writers on psychology. Those professed phrenologists, shallow fellows as they often are, can after all undoubtedly to a great extent judge of and individualize characters by the cranial developments, or, in plain language, ‘bumps,’ and indentations of the heads of mankind. Now upon that science our Professor has advanced by long chalks—having hit upon the means of defining and even exactly weighing the quantity as well as quality of each feeling, disposition, propensity, or other trait of any individual character, of the interior working of which the external developments, or say bumps are the result. He can actually gauge your self-reliance, for instance, or your veneration, or destructiveness, or any other peculiar characteristic, just as an exciseman will gauge the spirit of gin or whisky. You can accurately measure air, you know; or the weight, strength, or quantity of steam.

“The Professor is now trying experiments founded this upon theory, from which he looks forward to becoming the happy author of enormous benefit to his fellow-creatures, which is really more reward to him than all the glory and pride of philosophical discovery and power, vast as that is, to the few who are fortunate enough to reap it deservedly; but he is, I must also tell you, in all he does one of the most benevolent and philanthropic of men.

“The benefit he looks forward to is, when once this theory is thoroughly established, simple, though perhaps from its novelty, a little startling; for he looks forward to immensely improving the general average of human nature, and bringing to almost absolute perfection the characters and dispositions of mankind in general; for instance, according to this most wonderful discovery, half a dozen friends, we will say, may agree together to amalgamate, and by carefully comparing their individual superfluities or deficiencies of temper or propensities, may interchange and transfer from one to another such characteristics as they may have to spare, in return for proportions of others they may happen to require. Thus the timid man may receive a portion of the exuberance of spirit from the over-rash, to the mutual improvement of both parties; or a stingy fellow impart some of his over-

carefulness to the spendthrift, receiving in exchange some of the other's superabundant generosity.

"It is not at all a bad idea, is it? But the Professor hopes to go even a step further still, that is to be able to borrow and return certain quantities of character, of course with the consent of the original possessor. The great difficulty will be the immense amount of confidence and trust it will require between man and man; but only conceive what an advantage it would be, if lazy or not inclined to go yourself, you could lend a friend, less fortunately endowed by nature, your own good ear and musical taste, for the night at the opera, just as you might your opera-glasses, to be returned when done with; or could add your amount of physical pluck to his own allowance, for a hard day with the hounds!

"It was on the question of that very quality of 'pluck' that the Frenchman mentioned you. He happened to see you one day coming away from the fencing school, and instantly was for rushing after his noble champion and deliverer, as he called you, in some civil war or revolution, according to his account, in which he seems to have embroiled himself at Cambridge; but as if he *had* overtaken and kissed you in the street, as he certainly would have done, you would probably have knocked his head off, and so debarred yourself from

ever recognising his identity, we restrained his ardour, and you went on out of sight."

I did call to mind when *Taraxacum* thus mentioned the fact, a foreigner who was hanging about one hunting term up at Cambridge, though I never knew much of him, but remembered meeting him once or twice out at supper, and seeing him make a most extraordinary exhibition out with the Drag. Some of the men used to keep him up there chiefly, I believe, for the fun of chaffing him, and giving him mounts on the most unruly brutes of horses they could find, with the hounds or the "herring-dogs;" and in one of the annual November Town and Gown rows, I one night found the unfortunate "*Mossoo*," as they used to call him, mistaken for a University man, sitting in the gutter in front of Trinity-gate, which had been shut against him, and surrounded by a whole *levée* of infuriated cads, pelting him with dirt and stones. I really almost think they would have killed him in a few minutes, if I and some others had not happened to come up All Saints'-passage at the nick of time, and rescued him from the Philistines.

"Yes, that's it," answered *Taraxacum*; "that rescue, and your rowing, and your hard riding, are subjects on which it is a caution to listen to him. You are, according to him, a demi-god, a regular

Hercules ; and when the Professor was seriously lamenting that the one thing needful in the careful preparations for the remarkable *séance* he has promised us, was, if possible, the infusion of more animal courage amongst us, to carry us well and safely through the ordeal, as I suppose it may without any disrespect be truly called, then it was that Frenchy proposed to put the Professor's own system in force, and either get you to assist, or, if you objected to that, to kindly lend us the use of your courage for the evening, which, as it will probably be late, and I know you keep regular hours, you really wont want while you are in bed and asleep, and you shall have it back all right again and unimpaired in the morning."

The favour he asked was really so unusual, not to say astonishing, especially considering at that time our very slight acquaintance, that I could only say that I must take time to consider of it. It was not until after my friend had taken himself off, and I had turned into bed, that it occurred to me, that I had never after all elicited from him the exact sort or nature of the schemes which Gorles was trying on against Katie's peace and welfare. But I really had been so carried away with his extraordinary account of the Professor and his supernatural powers ; besides, even while he so briefly alluded to her, friendly as he expressed him-

self, I could hardly bear to hear her name, or at least the mention of her in his unhallowed mouth ; and as we had strayed off further and further, felt a repugnance to returning to the original subject of our conversation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WOE TO THE HOUSE OF DE LORME !

THE next day, and the next, I called more than once at the door of Lüttichau Strasse to make inquiries after Katie ; the accounts were always the same,—bad as bad could be.

I did not like to go in, after the scene I had had with my uncle ; I did not seem to care about seeing him, only perhaps, as it would have been, to increase his troubles and add to his bitter distress. And as to my aunt, she was all day and night in the poor girl's room, for having married the Colonel when Katie was still quite a little child, she was, I will so far say for her, every bit as fond of, and wrapt up in her, as if she had been her own daughter.

Only at last, on the second afternoon, she came out to the sick chamber door and sent for me to come up, when I had almost insisted upon hearing from herself how Katie was going on.

She could hardly at first speak to me, and looked

so wretchedly sad, and, as I could not help feeling, reproachfully at me, that even in my grief I felt selfishly hurt, and said : “ No one can be more miserably cast down than I am, at this dreadful trial which is sent upon——let me say, *us*, dear aunt, and include myself, as if I were even a closer relation than I actually am, for indeed I love her as much or more than a cousin or even any brother could. I feel it, I say, as deeply and anxiously as any of you ; but you don’t think that I have been the cause of this dreadful illness ? ”

“ We are all in God’s hands, Frank,” she said ; “ but Katie left this house perfectly well, in full health and spirits ; and you must know best, if any one can, why she came back to us in the evening in the state she did.

“ Both Dr. Snezzter and Dr. Todleben agree that it is the poor darling child’s brain that has been affected, and that she must have received some severe mental shock. What is it that you have told her ? Your uncle seems to have some idea ; but is more furiously angry on the subject, even in spite of his natural anxiety and distress, than I have ever known him to be during all the years I have been married to him. He wont tell me, or even let me allude to it, though I am sure, and know that he knows something too dreadful perhaps for me even to know. And how

could you, Frank, so abuse our confidence in you as to dare to even breathe anything so very dreadful as this, whatever it is, must be to an innocent young girl like Katie? Oh, Frank, Frank, I never would have thought it of you!" and she fell back on to the sofa, crying like—like a "regular good one," you know—was the best simile which my friend Lambard could find after a slight hesitation; the poetical, for this time at least, seeming to have failed him.

But he continued: "Indeed, my dear aunt," I replied most earnestly, "I am quite aware what my uncle suspects and thinks; and as to anything being very dreadful, that there are some things very unaccountable in this matter, I will grant you; but to me, were it not that poor Katie's illness and danger entirely prevented any other thought or feeling (of myself particularly), at this present moment, the most dreadful part to me would be, that an Uncle who has been so kind, and to whom I had really become so fondly attached, should doubt my solemn word and truth, and deliberately brand me as a liar—that is something dreadful, if you like. (I know, and felt while I was speaking, what a selfish beggar I was at the time, but of the amount of pain and bitterness which that scene had caused me, you can perhaps have no idea.)

"But come now," I went on, "to clear myself at least

in your opinion ; and though I cannot but feel how out of place, and almost sacrilegious it seems even to speak on such a subject at this awful moment, when that poor girl is lying on the other side of that wall struggling between life and death—still cannot you, my dearest aunt, as a kind and sensible woman of the world, knowing what young people's thoughts and feelings are, guess and imagine what a young fellow of one-and-twenty might be likely to say to a beautiful and charming girl of eighteen in whose company he had the happiness and good luck to find himself constantly thrown ? Though for the matter of that, the very first time I ever saw Katie was enough for me. But all I really did say, aunt, was to tell her how dearly and fondly I loved her, with all a heart's fresh force that had never till then felt or known what love was, and how with your and Uncle George's kind consent——”

“ Never, my dear boy ; my poor, dearest Frank, it never, never can be !” And again she set to work to howl and cry like——“ another regular good one,” only even worse than before—again at a loss for an adequate simile.

“ Believe me,” she went on, “ that never, never can be, Frank. Oh, these dreadful family secrets ! One knows how it is hard and painful enough to

have to keep any secret of any sort, but these important family ones are I am sure the worst of all. My dear nephew, this misfortune is, as I now feel, our own fault. We ourselves are most to blame; I see it all now; indeed, I may say, that I saw it before it occurred; but when I spoke to and warned your uncle, he only said I was a fool, and that there was no chance of anything of the sort; that it was, in short, so entirely out of the question, that he never would admit the very thought even of a marriage between his child and yourself.

“Frank, you may hope to marry many and many as nice a girl (that is, of course I mean to say, one of them), as our darling Katie, who are to be found in the world. Katie herself may, perhaps, be a happy wife to some lucky man, if, when the time comes, and the secret is fairly told to himself and his family, they do not fear the risk, as some people do not; though I have heard that his first wife’s relatives never told the Colonel beforehand. But secret or no secret, this much you shall know, my poor wretched boy, to reconcile you with what seems now so hard to bear, and yet what will, please God, as you may live on to become older and wiser, cause you hereafter to be thankful that your affections should have been so cruelly disappointed. Well, then, for I think under the cir-

cumstances that it would be positively wrong not to tell you,—you must know that Katie's poor mother, who as you may have heard died when that poor child was born, had had two female keepers holding her down, night and day—and it was in a private lunatic asylum, where she had been for nearly the whole of the three previous months——

“From Katie's earliest childhood this secret has always been rigidly kept from the poor girl herself, so as to avoid all chance or fear of affecting or influencing her own mind. The greatest care and every precaution have likewise been taken against exciting her in any way ; and so she has happily hitherto grown up perfectly free from the least suspicion or taint of her unfortunate poor mother's malady.

“Your poor uncle for years had hoped and flattered himself that the malady was not hereditary ; and so her family, when upbraided with disguising the truth from him at the time of his marriage, always persisted in asserting ; but he never could be satisfied to leave well alone, and be contented with thinking that, ‘Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof,’ but having by some means scented out and established further conclusive evidence, was then almost driven crazy himself by discovering that there is no doubt that an uncle of hers, and other near relations, had been lunatics, and that

her people knew it well enough, but had most carefully always kept the truth hushed up, and even denied the fact altogether.

“You, Frank, had not been here ten days or a fortnight before I began to see and notice how much you were evidently attracted by our child Katie; and I then ventured, though I do not often trouble him with all I think and hear, to mention the subject to your uncle, who, as I tell you, snubbed me flatly; I might, indeed, with truth say, rudely.

“He said that he knew the world, and what young people were, better than I did; that if left alone, and even encouraged to be much together, such a thing would never enter into either of your heads; but if there should appear any restriction or interference in your constant companionship and intimacy with one another, he could assure me that it would be the very way to bring about what was to be so much dreaded. I thought, I must confess, that it was a strange view to take at the time, but your dear uncle, like all other men, always thinks he knows best about everything; so having fairly said my say, I could only fold my hands submissively, and hold my tongue as I had been bid, and secretly pray that my worst fears might never turn out to be too well founded, as now they have done.

“Frank, your uncle loves you, believe me, almost, if not quite as much as his own children ; but he at that time solemnly said, what he has since more than once repeated, that he could rather endure to see you both lying dead before him, than that a marriage between you and Katie should ever take place.

“I may add that he did so far condescend to act upon my suggestions, as to speak quietly and indirectly to Katie herself upon the subject ; and though of course he could not even breathe a hint of the real true cause, and took occasion to praise you personally very highly, and to say how pleased he was to see you and herself so much enjoying each other’s society, yet that there were strong family reasons—I rather think he gave her to understand that some old family feud, or something of that sort, existed—why a marriage between you could never even be dreamt of for an instant. Though having chosen his opportunity of thus speaking to her—as if casually—he at the same time sufficiently showed that he was strongly in earnest ; for Katie replied, half laughingly, half seriously, that he might assure himself there was not the slightest chance of either of you ever thinking even of anything of the kind ; for that you were both much too happy together as first cousins, or even brother and sister, to think of any such nonsense, as she called

it. Then he looked across at me, I remember, as much as to say how right he was, and how much cleverer in his management—just like a true ‘lord of the creation,’ as you men like to consider yourselves.”

“But, my dear aunt,” I said, “even with the full knowledge of this great secret into which you have now let me, if it is, as you have implied, not out of the question that Kate is some day or other to marry, why should not I, who I am sure love her as much—ay, far more intensely than any other man in the world ever could do, not be allowed to take that risk as well myself? If I do it with my eyes open, willing and rejoicing as I should to do so, and with the consent of my own parents, who——”

“You !” quite screamed my aunt—“is it likely? Is it possible, I ask you, that they would consent to anything so dreadful, so certainly horrible?—or even if they could be by any infatuation induced to such a step, can you think that we—consider, my poor dear boy—or is it possible that you are not yourself aware——”

At that very minute she was interrupted in what she was going on to say by a loud cry of grief, so sudden, such a thrilling wail from the sick room, that we were rushing towards the door just as Harrison

came bursting out, and, staggering towards my aunt, fell sobbing with her face in her lap.

“Oh, madam! madam!” she shrieked, “it is dead she is. She is taken; the darling angel is taken from us!” and she filled the whole house with her violent sobs and cries.

Unbidden, I ventured to follow my aunt into the inner room, and there lay back upon her pillow the lifeless form of the poor girl, white as the purest marble, but so lovely—I really think she seemed more lovely in my eyes than ever—though there could be no doubt that life was gone. She looked more as if she had fallen back into a deep sound sleep—her eyes were closed, and her lips just wide enough apart to show where her pure spirit had escaped, in one very deep-drawn sigh—as her nurse, who had been sitting by her side, described—till then having been breathing placidly and regularly, only disturbed by occasional mumbling, or a sort of low moaning in her sleep; but with that deep sigh the breathing had suddenly and altogether ceased.

The last expression left upon her face was indescribably beautiful, and yet I could not help fancying, as I stood by her, gazing intently upon those features, which as I then felt I should never see again, that they betrayed a something of defiance, or of earnest

appeal, such as they wore that last evening we were out together, when she was trying to stop me from uttering those burning words which, Heaven forgive me! would come out.

I could now more easily understand her scruples and reasons, which at the time I thought so strange.

Though from the first moment we had passed into the room we had no doubt or hope left, yet until the medical men, summoned in all haste, as of course they had been, had shaken their heads, and announced the fatal truth, we, at least I know I had, felt that there was yet something to cling to.

While they seemed to seek for any sign of pulsation, or anxiously to listen at the parted lips for the faintest indication of a breath, we ourselves remained almost as motionless and breathless as the poor darling child herself, in our suspense as to the result; and knowing too well all the while what the truth must be, still refused credit to our own senses.

The surface of the small hand-glass which had been held to her mouth, more, as I could see, to satisfy and convince her parents than the Doctors themselves, remained undimmed, and confirmed only too truly that she was gone,—taken from us for ever.

But I need not, cannot, even now, attempt to describe further that melancholy scene. I was roused

from my own intense agony of grief, in which, having fallen upon my knees at the bed-side, I was sobbing like a three-year old—that is, of course, I mean, my dear fellow, like a young child, not a horse; I was roused, I was going to say, by being very sternly requested to retire by the Colonel. Even in my wretchedness I think that I felt amazed at the peremptory tone and manner in which, as if himself intent upon struggling against, and choking down his own sorrow by extra harshness towards myself, he spoke, and actually repulsed the hand which I had almost unconsciously held out to him.

“Go!” he said, “pray go—at least at present,” and his voice sunk into a hard unnatural whisper. “You had better go, sir; and pray do not come here again:”—and then, as if correcting himself, added, “until your aunt or I feel equal to sending to let you know that we again wish to receive you.”

CHAPTER XIX.

RUMPLE STILSKINS' SERVICES ARE REQUIRED.

How I found my way home that evening to my lodgings I can now hardly tell you. I have a vague recollection that upon reaching the open air I felt myself reeling about as if I were drunk ; staggering down the door steps and along the street, clutching by the houses and walls as I went ; the whole place was whirling round me ; until I believe I took refuge, but I cannot at all say for how long, in the recess of an open doorway, and there stayed until found and assisted home by one of those public chairmen in bright yellow liveries who frequent the streets and public places of Dresden as the sworn-in porters and *commissionnaires* of the city.

As it happened, the fellow having been frequently employed by me on divers errands and odd jobs, knew me well personally. We used to call him *Rumple Stilskins* ; I don't know why exactly, except I rather think it means bandy-legs in his own crackjaw lingo,

and comes out of some well known fairy tale or other.

Any how, he was a long-armed, crooked-kneed individual, who having somehow picked up a few broken words and sentences of our language, was exceedingly proud of his accomplishment; and had I believe in consequence been specially told off by the police authorities to take care of and, if he could, keep out of mischief any drunken Englishmen whom he might meet about, or hear of as needing his assistance in returning to their respective hotels or lodgings, or anyhow likely to get themselves into any trouble with the appointed custodians of public morals and order, which by this timely prevention might be avoided.

Of course the honest *Stilskins*, by which abbreviation he was more generally recognised, at least by his English patrons, did not for a moment doubt that I was in what he, I fancy, considered to be the normal and natural condition of my countrymen, and proceeded with every possible care and tenderness to convoy me to my own quarters; and having seen me safely deposited, expressing by the way some amazement, not to say admiration at my having sense enough under the circumstances as he viewed them to be able to unlock my own door, he took a most respectful leave of me, expressing his kind intention of calling

early in the morning to inquire after my health, as well as to receive the small "Trinkgelt" over and above the pay for his special service to which, as he assured me, he was according to a regular official tariff justly entitled. Left to myself, stretched full length upon my bed just as I had tumbled on to it when I came in, there I lay overwhelmed, positively stunned, as if by a regular crack from some fellow's fist on my head,—not asleep, but in a kind of stupor without recognisable thought or feeling.

How long I thus remained I can scarcely tell, but it must have been for some hours, as, though neither shutters nor curtains had been closed, the room was in thick darkness, when I was partially roused by a tremendous row at the outer door of the house, a hammering and thumping which continued louder and louder, interspersed with very short and perceptibly decreasing intervals or pauses, as if whoever it might be was listening for some answer, or signs of recognition from within, and then after each short pause bang, bang, bang came the blows again with a heartier will than before.

I think it was just beginning to dawn upon my mind that there might perhaps be somebody wanting to come in, when I heard the patter of loosely-shod footsteps descending the stairs, the outer-door

opened, and there rose a loud altercation between my landlady—as I could tell by her shrill tones—and some man—as far as I could make out by the depth of the voice, though I did not recognise it at first as one which I ought to know.

I soon began to think that I heard my own name several times repeated, and, with that clue, could pretty well make out that whoever it might be, was eagerly inquiring after and desiring instantly to see me.

“My knowledge of German by that time, though still limited, was enough to serve me in all my common wants of life, inquiries, and such like ; and it is wonderful how sharp one’s ears and intellects become if you find out that you yourself are the subject under discussion.

Now, as it so chanced, none of the people of the house had happened to have seen me come home—the door of my private room being the first close upon the top of the stairs. My old landlady, who was a queer tempered female when fairly roused, was not therefore perhaps on the whole so much to blame in asserting, and pertinaciously sticking to her assertion, as she did (not without many extra shrill yells and adjurations upon the irregular ways and habits of all English lodgers in general, and of myself, that night at least in particular);

that Herr von Lambard had not come home ; that his door was locked up ; and that moreover he had, as he always would do, carried off the key with him, instead of leaving it in her charge, as, according to her private views and regulations, it ought to have been left. In confirmation of her statement, I heard her call special attention to the lamp at the foot of the stairs, and my particular taper still waiting my return beside it.

Though now tolerably aroused, and perfectly taking in the fact that it was no other individual than myself who was thus inquired after, I still felt a strange indifference on the subject, and disinclination to stir or show any signs of life. I have a sort of idea that if I felt at all concerned in the matter, it was with a vague feeling of curiosity and wonder, as to where Frank Lambard really could be, and whether they would find him anywhere else—as I heard the inquiry continued whether he was likely to have gone to any party, or to be at the *Ressource*, as they call the club there, or whether his friends in Lüttichau Strasse would be likely to know, or even whether he might not possibly be still there, though it was much later than he usually stayed. To that last suggestion I distinctly remember giving mentally a decided support, as not at all unlikely, or at any

rate thinking that it might be well worth going so far to see ; and I sat up upon my bed half-inclined to holloa out, and offer to go myself, as knowing the way better, and being perhaps less likely to frighten or disturb the De Lormes in case that I should not be still there, than if a stranger should go knocking them up with inquiries which, at that time of night, might appear ill-timed and irregular.

I was still debating whether I had better or not do so, when my landlady, as I suppose only too happy to jump at that, or any other conclusion likely to rid her of her troublesome disturber, and allow her to retire again to the depths of her own virtuous feather-bed, seemed much to favour that idea ; for she immediately took upon herself to state that no doubt Lüttichau Strasse was where I should be found ; and shutting to the door with a slam, I could hear her clump up the stairs, grumbling at every step at all Englishers, as more troublesome and incomprehensible than any other nation, Christian or pagan, under the sun.

It could barely have been a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes later, when yielding again to the feeling of lethargy, heavier and different somehow from natural drowsiness—having only just roused myself sufficiently to throw off my coat and neckcloth, and then lying down as before on the outside, or rather

on the top of the upper feather-bed which they give you in that country by way of a covering,—without further undressing, I had fallen off into a kind of doze, when I was once more startled by the row at the door beginning again ; whoever it was, pounding as if they were going to break it in, and then came a clatter of small stones or gravel against my window, and a loud voice—the same voice, I could recognise, as before, only this time in plain English.

“Lambard!—I say, Frank Lambard, are you within there?—if so, I must see you this moment!—Come down directly, and let me speak to you—a most important matter—a matter of life and death, or I wouldn’t come at such an hour. I know you are in there, for *Stilskins*, whom I met and have brought back here with me, says so.”

And then began again a thundering and rattling at the street door, which made the old house echo again.

It was De Lyons’ voice, and I was fairly roused, and sufficiently myself by this time to think that something really must be the matter, so I groped about for a match and struck a light. Again the indignant landlady had gone down, and was again solemnly protesting that I was still not yet returned.

Almost again apparently convinced, De Lyons seemed to be leaving the door in despair, as I could

hear by his voice, when as I suppose stepping back into the street, he looked up and saw the light I had struck, in my window; and then of course, satisfied that I really was there, he slipped by the irate old Mrs. Slanngartz, who, putting her head out of the open door, began to yell for the "*Polizei*" with all her might and main; while he having tumbled over and extinguished the afore-mentioned lamp in his violent haste, was kicking at the panels of my door, and shouting for me to let him in, as if the house was on fire, which I really began to think must be the case.

"For heaven's sake, my dear fellow," he cried, bursting in in a state of the most panting excitement as soon as I had unbolted the door, "jump up at once! You have not a moment to lose. Here, dip your head into this tub of cold water; or twist a wet towel round your temples:—that is right; dip it again; let me pour some down the back of your neck, that will set you right in a moment—get your things on—what, you are dressed? Oh, to be sure; *Stilskins*, whom I luckily met as I was cutting along to Lüttichau Strasse, told me how he had brought you home: and that made me come back again, certain that you must be in, in spite of that old she-dragon's confounded lies and protestations.

CHAPTER XX.

FRANK LAMBARD TO THE RESCUE.

WE were soon out in the dark street, and De Lyons was lugging me along with all his might by the arm.

“ Now then, old fellow, hold up ; gather your senses together—you are all right, ain’t you ? So, now let us be off, and not lose a minute in getting down to their house. I told you that I would prevent it if I could, but I was afraid I might be sold after all ; but now the Professor has told me how to go to work, and I knew old Zauber would do anything in the world for me ; and so I hope we have saved her, and shall beat the little rascal with his own weapons yet. Though it is a matter of life and death, I tell you ; for if decay, however slight, once began, we should be too late.”

“ Where are we to go to ? what are you talking about ? ” I said. I began to think, raving as he was, almost incoherent in his excitement, that De Lyons was really drunk.

“ Where to ? To Lüttichau Strasse, of course—to

your friends—your relations you told me they were. Have you heard whether anything has happened to that jolly pretty girl—young lady—your cousin, you know?”

Then the whole truth, and all that had occurred that afternoon, which seemed to me like months ago, suddenly rushed back to my mind. It was till then as if it had gone completely and entirely out of my head; the memory of it all came back like a fresh and crushing blow upon my mind.

“Lüttichau Strasse!” I said, resisting him; “I can’t. We must not go there—we must not, indeed. Have you not heard what has happened?—there is death in the house there. Katie, my cousin, the beautiful girl you speak of, is dead: she died this evening.”

“What time?” he inquired, “what time was it? Collect yourself; try to think, my dear fellow, if you can remember the exact time. Was it six or seven, or after seven? Try to think; for it is really important.”

I knew it was after seven, I said, in a sort of dreamy way; but in spite of my confusion, could not help thinking that, even though he did not know her, it was strange that he should not be more surprised or shocked, but ask such minute particulars as to details.

“It was striking seven, I know, as I went upstairs

to see my aunt; and I suppose it must have been almost half-past when we heard the nurse cry out that she was dead."

"Half-past seven, you say? and it is now just one; then we are in time yet to save her, if you will only do as I tell you, and firmly believe in the success of what you are going about, without any doubts or hesitation. Do you hear me?"

I could hear what he said; but felt the sensation of drowsiness again coming over me so strongly that if De Lyons had not caught hold of me in his arms, and supported me with his whole strength, I felt that I must have sunk down then and there—I could not have moved another step.

Very luckily we were close by a great fountain, or rather cistern of water there is at the corner of one of the avenues—*allées* they call them—into which my friend dipped his handkerchief, and most liberally besprinkled or, I might say, deluged my face, chest, and hands, till I was wringing wet all over; and then fixing me upon one of the benches with my back up against a tree, began a series of manœuvres which, that being the first time I had ever seen anything of the sort, stupid and bewildered as I still felt, I think had as much the effect of concentrating my attention and so tending to recover the proper action of my mind, as from any

particularly magnetic or physical powers in his manipulations. Anyhow, he set to work, making upward passes with his hands, not as I have since seen mesmerists do when they are putting a patient off to sleep, but just t'other way up, exactly the reverse, beginning quite low down almost at my toes, then up my legs and knees, and so gradually passing up my whole body to my face, and the top of my head.

His queer dodges certainly had the effect of making me feel better and more myself, though heartily uncomfortable, for I was seized with a violent fit of shivering; though that, perhaps, might have been caused (by the way) by the two duckings I had undergone.

All of a sudden a fresh thought seemed forcibly to have struck De Lyons in the midst of his operations.

"By gum!" he exclaimed, speaking to himself, "I should not be surprised if it were so! I can but try it on, at least. Here, Lambard, old fellow, pick up a bit, man, and tell me whether this article came from or has ever belonged to you?"

He dived into his pocket and lugged out an old kid glove all shrivelled up and dirty, which he thrust into my unresisting hand.

The immediate effect was marvellous, perfectly incredible.

No sooner had I clutched that glove than in that instant I was completely myself again, broad awake, and ready to act as ever I felt in my life.

“Hurrah! right, by jingo!” said *Taraxacum*. “Of course it was,” still talking to himself more than to me: “what a fool I was not to think of it at once, and how lucky that I grabbed it with the other ramshackle as I did; very odd it did not occur to me before, when I saw the state you were in, but I suppose that sinner *Rumple Stilskins’s* jabber put me off the right scent. But now, Frank Lambard, you really are all right and your own proper self again;” and he gave me a rough shake by way of settling that point, or perhaps of convincing himself satisfactorily; “listen to me attentively, and, as I have already told you, if you will follow my directions, though you have no time to spare, you may yet save your cousin, even though she may have seemed to you dead and gone. By looking sharp and acting like yourself with full pluck, you may still bring her back to herself and her parents.

“Don’t stop to ask questions, because every moment is precious. I will give you any explanations you like afterwards—to-morrow will do well enough for that—if you like; but now make haste; let us get to the house, and you must find your way in, by fair means, if you can, but if not, by force even, if we are

put to it ; but at any rate before another half-hour is over our heads, you must go in straight on end to where the young lady is lying in a trance, for it is no more, and on the truth of that fact I will lay my life itself. I speak as knowing what I am about, you see, and not on mere guess or conjecture. I have every reason for knowing that what I tell you is nothing but fact : you must insist upon being admitted to the very room where your cousin is lying, as you and her relations, I have no doubt, suppose dead, and lost to you all for ever. Stick to your point, mind—take no refusal ; and then having gained admission, place this that I now give you in her hand if you can, but anywhere actually touching her will do. Do it, or at least see it done yourself, trust no one else, and to the best of your power try yourself to believe with all your might in the happy fulfilment of your purpose while doing as I tell you.

“I suppose you are aware, that by the police regulations of this country, she will have to be removed from the house the very first thing in the morning, and within twenty-four hours of her supposed death must be buried ?—That is why there is no time to be lost ; it might be too late. This, I tell you, brought into her presence, and put actually in or on her hand, may, and I firmly believe will, save her.”

He held out to me a gold locket, which at the first glance I could see had undergone some rough usage ; the cover of it seemed to have been wrenched back, and the glass inside was broken right across. Together with the locket, though now detached from it, he also handed me a long dark glossy lock of hair, which smelt of burning, as if it had been singed or perhaps acted upon by some strong chemical.

“I could not get hold of these articles by fair means,” De Lyons explained, as he saw me looking up from them to himself with amazement. “I had no chance of doing so but by main force, and had, as you may see, a hardish tussle for them with the little rascal.

“But never mind all that now !—only don’t lose one moment more than you can help in doing all I have told you ;” and he began bustling me along again.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REVIVAL.

WE had arrived in the very street, and in front of my uncle's house, before I had at all realized my situation or my strange errand, or indeed made up my mind how to attempt even to gain admittance at such an unwarrantable hour, more particularly under the sad existing circumstances.

A very feeble light showed a glimmer through a partly open shutter. It was in the very room in which, as I in an instant recognised, with a cold feeling of pain, which seemed to freeze up my very brain within my skull, all that remained of the poor darling girl was lying; and I felt sure that by that feeble light Harrison probably, or one of the female servants, must be sitting up watching.

All the rest of the house was shut up entirely, and seemed, perhaps from the contrast of that single light, all the more profoundly wrapped in profound quiet and stillness.

I at first hoped and endeavoured to attract the atten-

tion of whoever it might be who was watching within that awful room, by calling the name of Harrison three or four times, but at the same time knowing how nervous and liable to terror she would most likely be, I was afraid to raise my voice much above a loud whisper.

“ Oh, this wont do at all !” cried De Lyons, losing all patience ; “ confound it, man ! can’t you understand or believe what I tell you, that it is a matter of life and death ?” and again working himself up into a state of excitement, he seized hold of the bell handle, and began to tug at it with all his might and main, and then to rattle and kick at the street door, as he had before done at my own, when determined to rouse me.

“ Never mind the consequences ! This is no time for mincing matters or humbugging about ceremony. I tell you that we, or rather you, must make them let you in, Lambard, or you will be too late—too late to save her from a horrible death, or even the more horrible fate of living without a soul. Such things have happened before now ; so here goes again, till I make the whole street hear us.’

“ *Wer ist ?*” cried a woman’s voice from the window, which was opened a little way.

Perfectly aghast as I was at my companion’s reck-

less assault upon the door, and judging, as I well could, of what must be its effects, and the feeling of those within, sorrow-stricken, and weighed down with grief as they of course were, my first impulse was to rush away anywhere to hide myself out of sight for ever, rather than be discovered as participating in what I felt conscious must appear such an outrage upon all common decency, or even humanity. I think I must have yielded to that impulse, only that I felt afraid of being recognised in the light of one of the few and far between street lamps which happened to be almost directly opposite the door.

I instinctively shrunk myself up into the recess of the entrance, where I could not be seen from the windows above.

“*Wer ist?*” again asked the person at the window, and then another voice added an earnest entreaty (of course in German) that, whoever we might be, we would kindly depart quietly and not disturb the house of mourning, “for we are visited at this moment with a most grievous affliction, and death is now in this house, in this very chamber,” it added, bursting into a violent sob. “Whoever you are, as Christians we entreat you to desist and leave us undisturbed in our deep grief to mourn in quiet over the loss of our poor child, who has this night been taken from us.”

It was my poor aunt herself. I knew the tones of her sad voice, and I stepped out of my hiding-place in the door-way into the street.

“Mrs. De Lorme, it is only me,” I cried. “My dearest aunt, do not be frightened, but for heaven’s sake come or send down to the front door, and let me come in. I must come in this very instant—it is a matter of life and death; and though it was not me kicking up that tremendous noise with the bell, or knocking at the door in that awful way, yet come in I must, I tell you; and if you will believe in me, and only trust me, I can and will save dearest Katie, and restore her alive to you yet.”

I then was standing out right under the full lamp light, such as it was, in order that she might see and recognise me, and so not be alarmed, or think that robbers or assassins were come to attack the house.

It had never occurred to me that I was all this time wearing the soaked towel bound tight round my temples, just as *Taraxacum* had tied it, to bring me to my proper senses; and thus arrayed had come out of my lodgings without a hat, or any other covering to my head: my coat was flung loosely over my shoulders with the sleeves tied round my neck, instead of my absent neckcloth; and what with my several immersions, first in the tub and subsequently in the fountain-

place, it is no great wonder that I presented a somewhat dilapidated, not to say ghastly appearance.

“You must indeed let me come in,” I again vociferated. “For Heaven’s sake, let me in before it is too late, and while there is time to save her, as indeed I can if you will only let me. Don’t you know me? Dear aunt, it is me, Frank Lambard, your nephew.”

“Lor’, tip me topsy-turvy!” exclaimed Mrs. Harrison, somewhat profanely (but she was always a privileged character in the establishment, and rather given to the use of strange modes of expression), as she shoved her head violently out over my aunt’s shoulder—“If it isn’t your very own nevy, ma’am, that ere Mr. Lambard hisself! in company, too, with one of them rumbustical studenteses, and both of ’em, s’ help me seraphims, seeming to my senses h’as tipsey h’as h’owls!”

“Harrison!” I cried, “come down directly and let me in! Do you hear me? I say, for Heaven’s sake, come down and open the door to me!”

She drew her head in again without vouchsafing me any sort of answer to my most earnest appeal; but as she did so, I could hear her say to my aunt, “Now, ma’am, had I best go for to rouser up the Colonel, ma’am, or do you seem to think we had better both skreak out for the police?”

I was becoming desperate, but once again I appealed

to them ; and that they might understand me, I spoke with a forced distinctness and precision : “ Harrison, confound your stupid tongue ! Aunt, indeed, I am perfectly master of myself, and all right, but I do, and must insist upon coming in ; and if you are not going to allow me to do so by the proper way immediately and quietly, I must do my best to gain an entrance as I can ; but to come in somehow I am quite determined.”

The window from which this parley was taking place was no height from the ground level, and as I, in my anxiety, mounted up upon the top door-step, I saw that it would require no very great effort of activity to have caught hold of the window-sill in a spring from where I was standing, and to have clambered in.

It did cross my mind to make the attempt, and so carry the fortress fairly by assault ; but unless absolutely driven to that resource by a direct refusal of admittance, I should have been sorry to have desecrated that awful chamber where poor Katie’s remains were resting, by what I felt must, at any rate at the time, have appeared a most unbecoming, not to say disgraceful act of violence, against two women, whom probably it would have frightened out of their very wits.

I went so far as to threaten it, however, and I heard a fierce parley going on inside between the mistress and maid, both talking hard at once, and I rather fancy, under the erroneous impression that it was in a whisper.

Whilst again almost considering whether I should not, as time grew short, be driven to extremes, I found that the two had come down together to the other side of the street-door, for I could hear them still cackling through the key-hole; presently the lock turned, the chain inside clanked, and the door, though I was expecting it to do so, opened so suddenly that I was inside, and it was sharply shut to again before I knew where I was. It was pitch dark, they had not brought a light down with them, and before I had recovered my surprise I felt myself violently seized hold upon on each side; my aunt on one arm, and her abigail on the other, hanging on like grim death with their whole weight upon me; and dash me! if I didn't feel that wretch Harrison, for though I could not see, I knew which was her by the extra tenacity of her claws which were digging into the muscle of my arm through my shirt-sleeve. Dash me, I say, if she wasn't fumbling with her garter, or stay-lace it may have been, trying her very best to tie my hands behind my back.

“There now, Franky, dearest,” said my aunt in a soft soothing, coaxing sort of voice, as if she were speaking to a child; “I am sure you wouldn’t wish to wake your poor uncle, would you, dear? who has only just got off at last into his first sleep; and surely, Franky, you cannot have forgotten all that we have been through this dreadful, dreadful day? Then he shall come, the dear boy, with his own aunt who loves him and will take care of him. He shall have the spare room, and go to bed there till the morning, and have a good night’s rest, and stay with us quietly till he is better, and quite recovered, and perhaps in time we may all hope to get through our dreadful loss, our bitter, bitter sorrow for that poor darling child, lying dead upstairs.”

“She is not lying dead,” I said very earnestly, “she is nothing of the sort, I will convince you. I do assure you, aunt, if you will only let me go up to the room quietly—come up with me yourself—she shall wake up from the trance in which she has been laid, for that is what she is in, and can and shall be restored to you; I wish I could make you believe me, when I tell you that I have been through nearly the same myself, though it had less effect upon me—I have, indeed, my dear aunt—since I parted with you this very evening.

I am not interested in the subject and
do not wish to say anything about it.
I am not interested in the subject and
do not wish to say anything about it.

"Where, Edward? I said." "None of that business,"
he replied, "as I furnished her signature with a
stamp." "But are you so sure of that?" "Certainly,"
said he, "and her name does not show if I am not
as good as my word. I will consent to any condition or
to anything you will do. I solemnly assure you."

It is not quite clear how much time passed. They were still standing as he set with all his weight that small mass of humanity, and I could hear their feet grinding on the earth, it was exactly as long as last, when, and it that moment, I was aware of the end of the passage, going off as I felt, from the top of the last light of stone, in which we had gradually all melted away together, in a kind of dissolving matter and behind me, under the ground, my sense left a little in the dark.

"Father, what will be the result?"

With my assistant, I spent most of the night and in the morning I worked most of day. I was not very

sorry to see Mrs. Harwood spinning on her own axis, on the mat at the foot of the flight of half-a-dozen steps up which we had been struggling. They had not shut the door of the room when they had come down to let me in. I could see the light burning there. I did not stop to think of progress, or economy, perhaps I should rather say, of anything of the sort, but ran quickly up, and in another moment was by the bedside where poor Kate lay, moved and arranged since I had seen her, as I had then thought, for the last time for ever.

The lamplight shone full upon her face, calm, and more beautiful than ever. An instantaneous, though most fervent prayer rose from my heart to my lips, that De Lyons' strong convictions and promises might prove true.

The strange effects which I had myself experienced, naturally, I supposed, tended to confirm my own belief and confidence more than would perhaps otherwise have been the case——

I felt that I prayed for Faith, and with full faith at the moment did I gently lay the lock of hair and the jewel with it, though separate, upon her white delicate hands, which were now placed crossed upon her bosom. As I did so, my eye was caught by a tumbler nearly full of water in which a few fresh-gathered flowers had

been placed upon the table by the bedside ; taking out the flowers, I dashed the water all over her face and neck.

At that very moment I felt myself violently seized and pinioned from behind. It was the Colonel who, as soon as he heard who it was, had hurried up after me, and now was holding me in the gripe of a lion.

“ Pray, oh, pray be very gentle with him, dearest George. Command yourself, and only be gentle !” I heard my aunt cry, who had bustled up after her husband, to the door. Pray don’t hurt him, poor fellow ! You know it is not his fault. For your poor child’s sake, and memory, be very gentle with him.”

I did not attempt to resist. I had carried through my intention, and done what I wanted, so did not care any longer to struggle, even if it would have been any use, holding me at an advantage as the old soldier was, with all his force.

He had turned me round and was walking me quite unresistingly to the door ; we were just leaving the room, actually in the very doorway, when, by Heaven ! we all turned round with a start.

A sudden start, indeed, and not without reason for it too.

It was dear Katie's voice, very gentle, and as if not half awake—

“Harrison,” she called lowly, though quite distinctly, “Harrison—mamma dear, are you there too? Oh, I am so glad that I am here, so glad to have come back again to you! I thought I should never, never have been allowed to see any of you again!”

I felt my heart give such a bound within me, it seemed like the snap of some spring. I only wonder now that it did not kill me on the spot.

The Colonel stood for an instant also, as if paralyzed, then dropped his hold of my arms, and in another instant was on his knees by his daughter's bedside.

As to old Harrison, before I knew what she was at, she had wound her skinny old arms round my neck from behind, in a hug nearly as tight as the Colonel's had been, and set to to kiss and slobber all down my cheeks and neck, so that, if I could have only got round at her, I should like to have tweaked her stupid old nose for her; as it was, I had to kick up pretty sharply behind, before I could get her off.

Well, explain it as you like, or think you can, it is all positive fact that I have been telling you, impossible or incredible as you may think it or not. As long as I live it is not very likely that I shall ever

forget that extraordinary scene, though of course there are particulars which I may not now have told you quite exactly.

I went down to the front door and there found *Taraxacum*, who had faithfully been waiting all the time. When I told him the result and fulfilment of his prognostications—instantly nailing me on the spot for the promise of an introduction the very first opportunity, which, under the peculiar circumstances, I do not exactly see how I could have refused—betook himself off to some favourite *Keller* or haunt, alleging that it was too late by that time to be worth going to bed; and, as I heard afterwards, celebrated his joy and self-contentment for having taken part in so very successful and praiseworthy an action, by getting so awfully drunk that it required the whole energies of *Rumple Stilskins* and no less than four of his canary-coloured comrades to carry him home to his own quarters, at some advanced hour of the morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

NOTICE OF REMOVAL.

You may well understand that after all I had gone through mentally, as well as physically, my desperate tussle with, and then the hugging I had undergone from Harrison, by no means to be considered as the least of my trials—when I did get back to my own lodgings, I was in no particular humour for either explanations or recriminations with old Mother Slanngärtz, my landlady, whom, notwithstanding her nocturnal disturbances, I found up, and evidently lying in wait for me.

It was by the time I turned into my own street, broad daylight, a fresh and beautiful summer morning. There was no avoiding her, for there she stood exactly in the centre of the open doorway.

To my courteous salutation of “Guten Morgen, Frau Slanngärtz,” she only vouchsafed a sort of husky grunt by way of response, and followed up what might be considered as the opening gun of a battery, with a

volley of musketry in the shape of invectives and reproaches, interspersed with occasional flights of rockets or shells, as far as I could judge of them by the tone of voice in which they were launched at me, in the form of sarcasms so stunning, that they seemed almost to take her own breath away.

Not only did the old dragon go in at me personally on the score of inebriety, irregularity of hours, and morality, or rather every sort of immorality which could be laid to any individual's charge, but also upon the iniquities of my friends in particular, and even my compatriots in general, for whom I felt it utterly useless even to attempt to make her understand that I could not pretend to hold myself responsible.

Fortunately it was of course entirely in her native vernacular, and delivered as it was with an unparalleled volubility, much that I have no doubt was impressive, if not valuable, as reflection and advice, was lost upon my untutored ears.

So, watching my opportunity, and dodging beneath her swinging arms, which, with the full force of natural eloquence were marking the emphasis of her discourse, I slipped into my own room, and, as we used to call it at college, sported my door before she could well turn upon me, so that the remainder of her observations, even, if possible, increased in intensity,

were delivered through the keyhole at me, as I tumbled out of my clothes and into my bed, and in less than two minutes was fast asleep ; though, for all I know to the contrary, the old shrew may have been jawing at me for another hour or more.

It was, I know, getting on into the afternoon before I awoke, refreshed and peckish enough, and I was just giving myself a preliminary stretch and roll over in my bed, before taking that important step which one always—or I will speak for myself, at least—hates so much, from my warm bed into my cold slippers, when my eye was caught by a piece of paper on the floor, which had evidently been thrust in at the bottom of the door.

No less did it prove than a formally drawn up document, commencing with a closely written epitome of the lecture I had undergone in the early morning, and terminating with a notice to quit forthwith, and to carry myself, and my goods and chattels elsewhere.

Trusting that the storm would blow over, I thought the best way would be to ignore and take no notice of the matter, so refolding it I just chucked it back to the spot from which I had picked it up.

And later, when the deeply-injured and irascible old lady brought me in my breakfast, and having carefully picked up the cartel had laid it upon the

tray before me ; I then, without pretending to be aware of the action, thanked her, and tearing it across proceeded to light my cigarette with it.

She snorted and her eyes distended. I thought she was going to break out again, but she seemed taken aback, and I had somehow got her out of my room again before she could find utterance to her wrath. Perhaps she had entirely exhausted her magazine of ideas and indignant objurgations at her previous attack: anyhow she was round, and outside, and the door between us, without having again had time to open fire, and I flattered myself that if she had proper time to cool, we should go on again all right, and that I should hear no more about it ; but there I reckoned without mine host, or I should rather say mine hostess ; but those Germans when they do get an idea into their most obtuse heads, are a pig-headed and very stiff-necked style of animal.

In the meantime, however, my predominant idea, even I think before that of going down to Lüttichau Strasse to inquire after, or perhaps, as I dared to hope, even see Katie, and under the strange concatenation of circumstances, make out how matters were likely to be going on there ; my first idea, I say, was to lose no time in finding out that little arch-fiend Gorles,

and bringing him to a reckoning for his sins and iniquities.

I had fully made up my mind, as soon as I had caught him, to smash, crush, and utterly demolish him, like any other venomous nauseous insect or reptile, then and there.

I did not look for any explanation, or intend entering into any argument with him. I felt that I should probably be baffled, or that by some of his tricks or jugglery he might escape me. I was conscious that I could bring no exactly definite proof or evidence against him. I had formed no plan of how I should begin, as to what I should say, or even do exactly, when I should, as I was resolved, have got hold of him, beyond his immediate annihilation.

I have since, upon looking back to my then feelings and intentions, had good reason to consider it just as well as not, that circumstances at the time prevented the carrying out of my immediate views.

Yes,—it undoubtedly was, as most things are somehow, for the best, that I had not the slightest idea where he lived, or where I should be likely to find him.

Taraxacum, to whom I naturally looked for certain information in that respect, was, when I called upon

him (as I think I have already incidentally mentioned), far too much overpowered by his joyous feelings, to say nothing of the glorious celebration of the said feelings, which did his heart, if not his head, so much credit ;—the state he was in being, as he afterwards explained, entirely on my account, and in the cause of real sympathy and friendship ; but he was far too heavily asleep to have the slightest chance of being fit to come out with or in any way be of any use to me.

Later I sent up a note by *Rumple Stilskins*, who had faithfully to his promise called early, and had been hanging about the door the whole morning till I could admit him—it was from him I learnt the particulars about De Lyons. I had also inquired the abode, or most usual haunts of Gorles, but he was, or professed himself ignorant on the point ; though promising to lose no time in finding out for me.

On this special errand I despatched him, giving him at the same time a note, which I meant by way of an ice-breaker for Lüttichau Strasse, announcing my intention, with the sanction of the Colonel and my aunt, to whom it was addressed, of looking in there in the evening.

In less than twenty minutes the trusty *Stilskins* was back again, bringing my own undelivered note in

his hand, and with the astounding information that the De Lormes, with their whole family and establishment, were gone, and that the house, or at least the part of it which they had occupied, was all closed and empty.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TO LET: A FIRST FLOOR IN LÜTTICHAU STRASSE.

QUITE unable to believe the fellow's story, I hurried off immediately to Lüttichau Strasse to satisfy myself of a fact which, though my fears foreboded only to be too true, my senses almost refused to take in.

There was no doubt about it. The house was all shut up and empty, sure enough.

I pealed at the door bell, I shouted for the woman of the house.

I could only learn from her, when she at last condescended to make her appearance with her mouth full, wiping crumbs and relics of the repast from which she had been interrupted, with the back of her great greasy hand, before she could find breath, or I suppose it might be space inside to reply, which she did after sundry leisurely puffs, that she could only suppose that the Herr *Oberste* (which being translated means Colonel), and his *gnädige Frau*, must have that morning received some sudden and most imperative

news from England which could thus have caused them to depart at a moment's notice.

That at only eight o'clock that morning had she, and they at the same time themselves apparently, had an idea of their departure, that all then had been in a state of confusion and hurry, everything packed up, their passports procured by special favour from the Minister with whom they were intimate; their accounts settled; her own among them, with three months' rent over and above what was owing, (she could not help showing her own intense appreciation of that part of the arrangements); and all had departed—all, the dead young fraulein, and all—by the two o'clock train from the Newstadt station.

"The dead young fraulein and all," she repeated; as I suppose, staggered as I already was, I had not exhibited a sufficient increase of astonishment at that last announcement; that the beautiful fraulein had died last night; that she herself had been into the room to see her, and indeed had herself assisted the nurse at the last arrangements of the body, and had then gone out, by the express desire of the Colonel, to give the requisite notification to the police authorities; and also, that while she was about it, though the Colonel, perhaps not aware of the customs of her country, or very likely forgetful from his heavy griefs, had not

desired her to do so, that she had gone a little way further on to an excellent *leichen-besorger* (which is their name for undertakers), in the same neighbourhood ; and ordered a handsome and serviceable coffin, to be decorated and furnished suitable to the station and means of a noble Englander's family.

But that she had been so entirely upset and flabbergasted by the announcement of their sudden departure that morning, that she had utterly forgotten to mention the fact of her having given this most requisite order ; and that now they were all gone, particularly the young lady herself, what she should do about the coffin when it came ; or what she must say to the man when he brought it, she could not even think."

Nor was that all of the strange and wonderful that she, a poor, though honest woman, who had hitherto, she blessed her angels, led a quiet life, undisturbed by any incident since her marriage thirty-two years before, until the last twenty-four hours had if not to endure, to experience.

Not only had the fair fraulein died, as she had related, and the whole house, herself included, been plunged in grief ; but also a desperate gang of burglars, *räuber* brigands had attacked, and actually succeeded in breaking into the house ; that the Colonel, brave man, although, as she had previously described, borne down and

bewildered with his loss, had resisted with the courage of a lion, and had alone sustained a hand-to-hand conflict with the assailants ; that she herself had distinctly witnessed, no, not witnessed, but listened to the struggle ; but that she and her good husband, who in his time had proved that he was brave enough by having served his time in the Landwehr, and so there was no need now of any further risks, since his courage was established, and he was no longer paid for it ; so that he and herself had hid their heads under their bed clothes, repeating the hymn to Vaterland, what they could remember of the ten commandments, and other prayers, feeling sure that their tenants on the first floor were being murdered, and that their own last hour was come ; but that, after all, the burglars had been foiled in their attempt, their real object having been, so far as she could gather from the report of the servant maid in the morning, not plate or money,—but being either English painters, or perhaps students of medicine in one of the neighbouring Universities, they were trying to seize and carry away the body of the young lady ; attracted by the report of the extraordinary beauty and grace of her form when alive, they probably wished to secure it, to embalm either as a model of art or for the further advancement of physical science, she could not quite say which ; but that the

same maid, having been some years in England, had given her to understand that the stealing, or even taking by force of dead bodies for the afore-mentioned purposes, was quite a common and established practice in that country.

That night, she went on to remark, have had something to do with the reason of the Colonel's sudden resolution of leaving her house, and indeed Dresden, on such extraordinary short notice, paying as he had (she again repeated with the same evidently intense satisfaction as before) the full rent for three months with a permission to take in another family even tomorrow, if she were lucky enough to catch one; and that all letters, bills, accounts, or claims against them which might be sent in—though as to the latter she was ready to testify on oath that they had always paid for everything by the week—but should any arise, the Colonel had left orders that they were to be sent in to his agent, Herr Fusser, in Weisseritz Strasse.

“But the young lady, the fraulein,” I inquired, “what has become of her, then?”

“Bless your stars,” rejoined the old dame, “what I have to tell you of her you will find to be the strangest and most difficult to believe of all this most strange story, although it may perhaps be after all

only in accordance with their other strange island customs, or religious ceremonies.

“I, Gretchen Speiser, with my own eyes witnessed the frau Harrison taking in a basin of hot *consommé* to the dead young lady; and was actually inviting her to rise and try to take some of it; when turning, she perceived that I had ventured to follow her into the apartment, meaning, as I did, to offer my services if I could in any way be of any assistance to them in their distress, she without ceremony pushed me out and slammed the door rudely upon me.

“She was always most haughty and of impulsive passions, was the Frau Harrison.

“But, *gnädiger Herr!* I almost fear to be suspected of presuming too much upon your credulity when I inform you that, as I afterwards heard from my hausesmädchen, whose help for cording up and carrying down their thousand of boxes and packages they were obliged to call in, they actually dressed the poor child's corpse, and laying her upon the mattress belonging to that narrow and most uncomfortable campsofa, on which the Colonel, who was an excellent man, but full of very strange whims, would always insist upon sleeping in preference to any other bed, however luxuriously prepared; they carried her down upon that

mattress and took her away with them in the droshky to the railway station.

“What the inspector of the polizei will think or say of this strange affair when, in accordance with my official invitation, he arrives, I am at a loss to imagine, or indeed the worthy maker of coffins; they will, I fear, accuse me wrongfully of having deceived and wished to make fools of them.

“But lo! as I speak the very words, *the leichenbesorgers are here!*”

Sure enough at that very moment two fellows carrying between them a lightly-built inner coffin, or shell, I think, one calls it in this country, appeared round the corner of the street.

Why is it, I often wonder, that one's natural sense of the ridiculous always seems most keenly alive in the very presence of any peculiarly solemn object, or at the moment of any special grief or great trouble; that such is the case has not every one experienced? On such occasions as a squeaking baby, or a chirping bird, or more especially a Sunday-school boy “whacked” over the head, in a country church: how such small matters will set a whole congregation giggling, particularly if the sermon happens to be above average dismal; not an individual of which would any-

where else have, perhaps, noticed the incident, or if at all, only as a nuisance.

A *lapsus lingue* of the parson at a funeral, or the chief mourner sitting himself down on his own hat, will often set people off in a roar; a mere blunder on the part of a blockheaded witness in the most serious trial for murder will produce what the papers parenthesize as “roars of laughter,” of which the involuntary perpetrators are themselves ashamed before it is actually over.

Is it not so? and does not universal experience in this respect again confirm my views on the great natural law of contraries to which I have before alluded as one of the existing, but little understood principles of natural science?

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GRAVE ORDER ENDS IN GRAVER CONSEQUENCES.

I WAS led to diverge slightly into certain by-the-bye observations in the end of the last chapter by the recollection of my own internal sensations as I stood by, witnessing the arrival of the two undertakers' satellites with their dismal burden between them, their faces professionally drawn down into an exaggerated lugubriousness of expression, as they halted, and proceeded to unwrap the black cloth in which the shell was enveloped; while there, speechless on the top step stood the landlady watching their operations with an air of helpless and mystified bewilderment, as though voluble as had been the first outburst of her narrative of wonder to myself, who happened to have been the first comer, now that she should have again to explain, account for, and as perhaps she felt, be held personally responsible for all that had so strangely come to pass, fairly overpowered by so much to tell, her ideas seemed to have clubbed themselves in all trying

to find vent at once ; and in sheer despair she gave up the attempt as a bad job, and stood gasping with her great mouth wide open like a fresh-landed salmon, as she stared at the undertakers, and they stood and stared back at her.

One often hears of “ dying of laughing,” without attaching much literal meaning to the expression ; but at that scene I really laughed to that degree that I thought I must have expired from utter exhaustion ; I laughed myself quite sore, inside and out.

I am sure my very ribs ached with the pain for two or three days after it.

And to bring the whole thing to a climax, while they were still standing staring, and I was stamping about the dusty pavement doubled up with laughter, up came the police official in cocked hat and full uniform, attended in due state by two myrmidons, to take the proper notifications of the death, of which he had received notice, as having occurred on the previous evening.

To attempt to describe the astonishment, incredulity, and other gradual feelings up to unwilling admission of the fact at least of there being no young lady to register as dead, or to bury, would be beyond my humble powers.

There they were all round the coffin, now laid upon

the steps, sputtering, shrugging, and all croaking with their hideous guttural jargon at once. One of the police seemed inclined to vent his outraged feelings by an assault upon me for my unseemly merriment, against which I had given up all attempts of struggling ; and he had even made a fierce stride or two towards me, till I heard his superior remind him that I was evidently an Englishman, and, therefore, better left alone ; so they returned to their confabulation, and ended in going inside to draw up an official account of many pages of the whole transaction, to be signed, and sworn to by the landlady, and her husband, for which they charged them at the rate of half a thaler a page on the spot.

As for the undertakers, who evidently considered themselves to have been shamefully bilked and ill-used by the defunct, they were for some time inclined to take their coffin upstairs, and, their right customer having escaped them, to insist upon the landlady herself, who, so far, according to her own account, had ordered it, paying for it, and putting it away until, as they tried to convince her, she would be sure to find she wanted it some time or other ; but as they would not abate a krentzer from the full price, it not being, as they argued, second-hand, the old lady stoutly resisted their proposal ; to which, perhaps,

if it had been a decided bargain, she might have been more inclined to listen.

The cocked-hatted official seemed half disposed to see the justice of the undertakers' claim, and to back them in it; when luckily remembering the written order which had been left with her by my uncle, for all accounts, claims, or correspondence to be forwarded to Herr Fusser, and producing the same to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, it was decided *nem. con.* that, under the circumstances, they could not do better than deliver their goods, as per order, forthwith at the house of that respected agent and accountant, and would, no doubt, be fully reimbursed for the same, as well as for their extra trouble.

So, winding-up with another unanimously voted resolution, loudly and most distinctly enunciated, as I flattered myself, for my special behoof, standing by as I still was, determined to see the absurd business out to its very end, to the effect that of all strange and incomprehensible people, Englanders were, as a nation, the most strange and incomprehensible, they adjourned accordingly.

If I could only have had an idea of what the real end was to be of the affair, the ludicrous commencement of which it had thus been my luck to witness, I would not have missed it for worlds: though the

consequences to which it ultimately led were dire in the extreme, and resulted in a tremendous trial for damages, and whole months of fierce litigation.

It seems the worthy Herr Fusser, whom I myself knew slightly, having cashed bills through his office, and so on, was on that very same day celebrating with open house the marriage of his only daughter, which had come off that morning, with a prosperous though rather elderly advocate of Dresden, of considerable wealth and position in his profession.

I use the term of "open house" on this occasion, as the story was told to me, advisedly, for whether intentionally, because of the heat of the summer afternoon, or may be from the negligence of the servants, whose attention was distracted by the unusual numbers of friends and relations assembled as they were in the great entrance hall of the old-fashioned mansion, to celebrate the joyful event. Anyhow the double doors of this said hall were left wide open; and right into the midst of the festivity, and circle of said rejoicing friends, and relatives, the two undertakers made their way; and, excited I suppose, partly by the heat, through which they had carried their burden so far, partly perhaps by the sense of having been hoaxed and disappointed,—feeling that they had right on their side, and were acting under the immediate counte-

nance and advice of the police ;—depositing the ghastly object on a great table in the centre with a bang, before any one could recover from their astonishment and horror, had there left it without one word more of explanation than that they had brought it according to orders, and would call next day for their money.

You may I daresay picture to yourself as well as I can the scene which arose upon this most unlooked-for apparition.

The ladies, of course, as they would have done in all countries, set to work fainting ; the lovely bride went off into screeching hysterics, and was taken so seriously ill on the spot, that they said,—well, never mind what they said, for I abhor scandal, and it has nothing to do with the story.

But in her ravings she frequently reiterated the name of an unfortunate lover, a very handsome, but as I was informed, very good-for-nothing young scamp of a student in the medical line, who had, it seems, publicly vowed dire vengeance against the false and fickle damsel herself, her father, and his more successful rival, her present respectable bridegroom.

On hearing these ejaculations, Herr Fusser, boiling over with the natural feelings of an indignant parent, without any further thought or inquiry, immediately

jumped at a not improbable conclusion, in which indeed he was unanimously supported by the opinion of the whole of his guests to a man, to the effect that this unlooked-for apparition must be an infamous practical joke and plot on the part of the discarded rival: he accordingly rushed out of his house blind with fury, and intent on all manner of mischief should he meet with the author of so audacious an insult and outrage as that which had been offered him.

As his evil destiny would have it, whom should he run right against, within a hundred yards of his own door, but the wretched lover himself in the lowest depths of despair; still, in spite of himself, hanging about the scenes of his once looked-for happiness, now blighted by disappointment and misery.

Some people indeed averred that he was only looking for a good deep place in the Weisseritz canal to drown himself, and his sorrows, at the very threshold of the false one, when, without one word of explanation or notice, Herr Fusser, usually the most peaceful and well-ordered of men, flew upon him, slapped, scratched, and spat in his face; and then, as they rolled together in the dust, in a desperate struggle, using the sharp end of a shoeing-horn, which he had caught up as the nearest weapon at hand, when rushing out through his hall, he then and there gouged a most frightful gash

across the cheek of his most innocent and undeserving victim.

There was of course the very deuce to pay. The police were brought up to the row, and it ended in all the parties concerned, bride and bridegroom included, being carried off to prison, and there having to pass many months of incarceration before the affair was finally expiated, and the damages arranged.

CHAPTER XXV.

TROUBLES NEVER COME ALONE.

ALTHOUGH, as I tell you, I did not actually witness the tragico-comic *dénouement* to the episode of the repudiated coffin, yet almost directly after they had occurred the whole particulars came to my knowledge under rather unlooked-for circumstances.

Having as I fancied seen the whole fun through to its end, little dreaming of course how much more was still fated to ensue, I had gone to the hotel for my dinner, and from thence returned leisurely to my lodgings, still over and over again bursting into such fits of laughter as to make many of the worthy Dresdenites turn their heads round to look after me, every time the absurdity of the scene I had witnessed, again and again tickled my inward gizzard, or whatever the anatomical contrivance within me is which produces that particular demonstration of hilarity.

I stood for a minute or two to have a good laugh well out at the door step of my own lodgings, but no

sooner, having given that really last necessary vent to my highly titillated feelings, had I mounted the flight of stairs leading up to my own room, than I and my laughter too, were brought up short by the sight of what at that moment met my astonished gaze upon the landing-place.

I had left the key in the door when I went out that afternoon, so that old Mother Slanngärtz might get in to put the place to rights.

There, I say, piled up outside, first struck my astonished view, my own portmanteaus, bag, and boxes, which, upon closer investigation I found to have been packed, that is, at least, filled with all my clothes, which had been pulled out of the wardrobe and the drawers in my bedroom, and all bundled in anyhow, all higgledy-piggledy. There were various other of my goods and chattels, including sundry choice little pieces of Dresden china, which I had from time to time picked up, German drinking tankards, foils, fencing masks, boots of all sorts and sizes, books, portfolios, my most precious travelling clock, my dressing case, all heaped up, one thing atop of another, the whole being crowned by my portable bath, still wringing wet; in short, all my worldly possessions turned out as if for sale by auction, before there had been time to ticket and arrange them.

I was yet standing quite aghast with wrath and astonishment, when my landlady, who had evidently been waiting in ambuscade behind this miscellaneous outwork of her own construction, stepped forth, and without vouchsafing one word of preface or explanation, handed me a rewritten edition of the notice to quit which I had treated so unceremoniously while at breakfast.

Having exactly deducted the rent of one week from the sum total due to her, which she seemed to consider, and for all I know, she may have been all right according to the law in that country, as equivalent to giving me notice for that same period, as covenanted between us, the amount of her demands came to about a *pony* or thereabouts, calculating in round numbers.

I suppose you know enough of sporting slang to understand that, or say, then, five-and-twenty pounds, if you would rather; though a hundred and sixty-eight thalers seven and a half groschen makes a deal more noise for the money, doesn't it?

That was the exact sum, I remember, due for several weeks' rent, besides breakfasts, postage, and many other sundries. And the spiteful old wretch demanded instant payment, and that I should then take myself and my goods, all of which she had, as I have de-

scribed, turned out of my room, off to some other quarters.

She had me, you see, in a regular corner there, con-found her ; and I think she was fully aware of it too, always poking her nose, as she was, whenever she found a chance, into all my drawers and places ; for the unlucky fact was, that I had not many days before changed my last ten-pound circular note, and at the time had not three blessed thalers left to my name.

I had been daily intending to write home for reinforcements, but had been so much occupied by all I have been telling you, that I had not found time to do so ; so there I found myself in a regular fix.

I tried at first what soft sawder would do, and began attempting to coax the old toad, but that was no go ; her back was too much up at the way in which I had treated her former notice with contempt. The injured tone, and even spice of bullying I next resorted to were equally inefficacious.

She and her dunderheaded numskull of a husband, whom she had summoned up from the realms below, only stuck doggedly to their demand for payment, and then instant quittance ; for that as to allowing me to sleep another night under that roof, after the disturbances, hardships, and insults they had undergone from

myself and my ill chosen friends, they were determined that no mortal persuasion should induce them to consent to anything of the sort. As to my plea of impecuniosity, that, they declared, they had nothing to do with, and did not believe in; or anyhow, if I had no money in my purse, I could go to my banker and get some.

I doubted very much in my own mind whether the banker would be willing to advance me the required sum upon the strength of my bare word as to an expected remittance. The continental bankers have been, I am sorry to say, so often let in, that their former unbounded confidence in the honesty of the British tourist has, not without reason, been considerably shaken; besides, I knew well that by that hour all the bureaux were long since closed, and that it would be hopeless to look for any of their occupants, had I even had any claim upon them for money in the regular way, let alone going to ask for an advance as a favour.

However, driven into such a fix as I was, I wrote a note upon the chance to Herr Fusser, who being, I knew, the agent, as well as personal friend of my uncle the Colonel, I thought more likely to assist me in my dilemma than any one else; and never, of course, guessing all that had happened to the poor man, sent it

off by a messenger, and made up my mind to wait where I was, upon the landing, until I should receive an answer, or, as I had politely ventured to intimate in my note, perhaps even he might himself come personally to see and advise me under my present adverse circumstances.

I did not exactly fancy leaving all my private property, loose and unprotected as it was, to the mercy or forbearance of the whole household, or, indeed, of anybody who might choose to walk in at the open front door.

I had given up, as a bad job, any further hopes of prevailing upon the people of the house to let me go back into my room, even for that night; and was attempting to put some of my stray articles a little into order, when happening to look round, I caught the villain Slanngärtz coolly occupied with my writing case, with his great stupid face peering into the inner compartments, which he had opened, I suppose, really to satisfy himself whether I had any money there or not.

I was quite glad that it was the man, and not his wife, for to tell the truth, I was just ready for some vent for the anger which I daresay you can give me full credit for feeling, at the pleasant little surprise which had thus been got up to meet me on my return home.

Before he was aware, I had caught the fellow by one of his huge lop ears, and sent him flying down the stairs, with a well-directed application of my toe, faster than I suppose my friend had ever found himself moving in his whole life before, right into the arms of a police officer who at that very instant, as if by magic, appeared in the doorway.

I recognised him in an instant as one of the identical cocked-hatted swells who had been in Lüttichau Strasse—the very one who had taken such offence at me for my disrespectful laughter.

Why he should have jumped up there like a jack-in-the-box, at that particular moment, I cannot say. Whether he had been quietly dogging my steps ever since, having marked something suspicious in my demeanour or appearance; or whether, as I am rather inclined to think, the fact of his being the same individual was a mere coincidence, and that he was only in collusion with the landlady; who, perhaps, anticipating a row, in consequence of her summary mode of ejection, had taken the precautionary measure of having a guardian of the peace near at hand; and he being, as I have already stated, in full fig for his other official visit, his superiors had not thought it worth while to dress out another for the occasion.

However it came to pass, there he was ; and drawing his long sword, like a hero, as soon as he had recovered from the shock of old Slanngärtz, who rebounded from off his manly chest just like an india-rubber ball, he rushed clattering up the stairs, and, waving his glittering blade within an inch of my nose, as I discreetly drew back, hemmed me into a corner in no time.

While still in that ignominious position, I confess I thought myself well off to be allowed to come to a parley with the enemy ; the result of which was, my promising that if he would put up his weapon, really dangerous as I felt it to be in the hands of an uneducated rascal, and in the gross misuse of which the authorities are always ready enough to back their myrmidons, except luckily for me at that time there existed amongst them a proper respect for *Milord Palmerstone* before their eyes. I agreed with him then, if he would put up his sword, to be taken quietly whithersoever he might feel it his duty to conduct me ; only further stipulating that we should first return all my things into the room, and, having locked the door, that I should keep possession of the key until I knew what was to be my fate.

This proposal of mine, after no end of loud talk and wrangling, ended in a compromise, by having the

key delivered up to the custody of the police himself, as a neutral party ; and that matter being settled, for the time at least, I had nothing for it but to surrender, and be taken under the conduct of the stern official, to answer for my transgressions, to wit, a violent personal assault and battery upon my landlord, at the principal police station.

I must tell you that, just as we were starting, my messenger to Herr Fusser had returned with my note unopened, and his face distorted with astonishment and dismay, as he gasped out a most confused account of all that had happened in the establishment of that respected citizen.

That he had found the whole house and neighbourhood in an uproar—that Herr Fusser's *Fräulein* had been married only that very morning—that she had run away directly after the ceremony with the old medical attendant of the family ; that the deserted bridegroom had turned upon, and denounced the wretched father for treachery, and connivance in the elopement ; that they, but whether the doctor or the bridegroom, he was not sure, but stated both or either of them indiscriminately, had fought a duel with Herr Fusser in front of his own door ; and that one, or both, or all of them had been slain on the spot (in that part he was again in much mental obfuscation) ; as to precisely

which of them was the dead one, he was not certain, but for one he could vouch on oath, having with his own eyes seen him in his coffin, that was, he had seen the coffin, which must have had somebody in it, on the great table in the middle of the hall.

Upon being cross and recross-examined, the poor boy,—he was only a street *gamin* promiscuously picked up,—became so hopelessly involved in contradictions and palpable inventions in his account of what really had happened, that the grim policeman, losing all patience, had felt it to be his duty to take him also into custody ; I suppose as an accessory after the fact, whatever the foundation of his strange tale might eventually turn out to be ; or, more likely, only too glad of a chance of an official excuse for putting his finger in the pie of, what seemed by all accounts to be, a criminal affair of unusual importance.

So the bewildered street boy and myself were marched off together, companions in misfortune, with Mother Slanngärtz in her state bonnet and shawl, for which we had had to wait while she retired to bedeck herself, and her in every way inferior half, who came as prosecutors and plaintiffs bringing up the rear.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CIVIS ROMANUS SUM!

THROUGH the gloom of the descending shades of evening, the wistful eye of the closely guarded prisoner in vain sought the beetling heights of the ponderous, and awe-inspiring portal ; as the late highly respected Mr. G. P. R. James would have described the entrance to the common prison ; that is if, like myself up to that time, he had never happened to have seen them.

Had he done so, truth would have compelled him to describe the gates, or rather large door which we entered, as a very commonplace, unnoticeable entrance, dingy enough, and suggesting to the senses an atmosphere of bad smells and frowsiness.

And such a discordant clatter and croaking, and cawing, for all the world like a disturbed rookery, as we found going on in the court or rather open yard, into which we passed from a long dimly-lighted passage, would, I think, have puzzled even

that most voluminous of novelists to have found words adequately to describe.

The unfortunate Herr Fusser, and his still more unfortunate victim of mistaken vengeance, with as many others of their party and family circle as they seemed to have indiscriminately laid hold of, had only just before been brought in; and were then awaiting the arrival of some of the judges or higher magisterial authorities, who had been specially summoned for a case of such important and aggravated disorder.

Thus it was that I so thoroughly picked up the full and true particulars of the whole story, as I have related them to you.

It was very late before that matter was heard through, and the whole lot of them remanded, and ordered to be shut up, and put on prisoners' treatment, without the slightest knowledge or certainty of when their trial might come on; which, far as I could make out, on inquiry, might be three days thence, or not till the next year, just as chance or other circumstances over which nobody seemed to have any control, might rule the matter; in this case, as it eventually turned out, it was, as I subsequently saw in the papers, ever so many months before all, more or less concerned, were well out of the business.

When my turn at last came on, I was, I must con-

fess, not a little taken aback when my particular gendarme, or *Polizeidiener*, which is, I believe, the correct Saxon title by which those official and officious geniuses call themselves, stood forth and brought his charge against me ; not, as I expected, for a summary assault upon a peaceful citizen, which, though I could not attempt to deny, I had been mentally preparing, in my best German, to justify, or at least extenuate by describing the extreme provocation I had received.

Not a bit of it. Utterly omitting, or, I suppose, having in the interval of time forgotten the actual affair for which, as I fancied, I had mainly rendered myself liable to the powers of the law, with a profusion of gesticulations and guggling rhetoric he based his accusation against me ; first, for petty treason, and a wilful insult towards the dignity and honour of the sovereign, and whole governing powers of the realm, inasmuch as I had dared in the open streets to jeeringly laugh at, and treat with ridicule, himself and his companions in arms, although dressed in their full municipal uniform, and at the time engaged in the discharge of one of the most solemn functions of their official duties.

Secondly, that being already marked by the police as addicted to irregular and intemperate habits, I, with

other evil associates on whom the authorities had also an eye, had within the last few nights been guilty of battering in doors, and forcibly breaking into unprotected houses ; disturbing his Majesty King John's liege subjects from their peaceful beds.

And thirdly, that when in consequence of my gross misconduct and immoral habits, I had been warned by my landlady, a most respectable and loyal citizen of moderate competence, to leave her lodgings, I had treated her with familiarity and insult ; and upon the most frivolous and groundless excuses had refused to pay her one groschen of the large sum of money due to her for rent, alleging that I had no money or means of liquidating her just claims ; thereby confessing and proving myself, in addition to my other enormities, to be no better than a common cheat and swindler.

And so the rascal was allowed by the functionary at the desk to run on, warming in his eloquence, and, as I verily believe, carried on to say much more than he had himself intended, or even thought of when he first started.

It proved to me, as I had suspected, that it was a regular " plant ;" that is, that there had been a previous understanding between him and Frau Slanngärtz, and that finding me to be the same party who

had dared to laugh at him, he was only too glad of the chance of so soon avenging his own offended dignity.

But, as I have said, the worthy citizen Slanngärtz's flying kick downstairs was utterly forgotten ; whether it was, as only a lesser offence, merged in the greater crime of having been wanting in respect to his own uniform, or whether my prosecutor had been so interested in the *dénouement* of Herr Fusser, and the coffin catastrophe, that that incident had the effect of driving the particulars of his own story out of his mind ; or whether, (the scandalous thought would obtrude itself into my mind), next to his own he took more interest in Madame Slanngärtz's wrongs than an impartial guardian of the peace ought to do, and was not altogether sorry to see her lawful husband getting his deserts, I cannot presume to give as a precise reason.

Perhaps, after all, the poor man's memory was naturally and constitutionally imperfect : I had rather begun to think so when he stood there so quietly, as a simple spectator, or rather listener, to the whole charge in Herr Fusser's case. I had at first fully expected to see him step forward officiously, only too delighted to be able to give an explanation of the previous chapter in the history of that coffin ; but he did not

seem to think it necessary to appear to know anything about the matter, and cast a significant glance at me, which I perfectly understood, to convey that by keeping our own counsel and holding our tongues, we should both save ourselves from a deal of trouble and complicated explanation.

It was too base of the ruffian after that familiar glance and secret passage of confidence between us to pitch it in so hot and strong against me, as he subsequently did; but he was carried perhaps further than he himself intended by the torrent of his eloquence, to say nothing of other potent feelings; and indeed would, I am sure, have gone on much longer if he had not been cut short by the presiding official, who, without asking for, or listening to any defence on my part, summarily inflicted a fine upon me of ten thalers, that is just thirty "bob," for insulting a government officer in his uniform, and while in execution of his duty, which I must pay instantly, or be locked up for the night.

As to the claim of the large sum (a few pounds always do look such a frightful lot either in specie or on paper, when translated into thalers or florins), for so many weeks' rent, the "Beamte," *i.e.*, Beak, who was not quite such a fool as he looked, pronounced it to be no fraud or matter for the police court, but a simple

debt ; still, as I was there, and had not the means, or refused to pay the demand, which could be sworn to as a just one, I might as well be detained in the other part of the prison as a debtor, and there kept until I could either shell out, or get somebody to give security for me. It was not the slightest use on my part trying to expostulate or explain.

I could not pay the fine, because I had not above half a dozen ten-groschen pieces in the world. I tried to make them understand that, under the circumstances, I might have procured the money, even at that late hour, if it had not been for the misfortunes of my respected friend Herr Fusser.

That assertion they looked upon as a most impudent and desperate *ruse* to serve my immediate purpose ; in short, a barefaced invention of the moment.

In vain I begged to be put to the very easy test of confronting the said unfortunate gentleman, within their very walls as he was. With their most obtuse and pig-headed views of justice, I could only receive as a reply to my most common-sense suggestion, that so far from Herr Fusser being able to help me, or say anything in my favour, I ought rather to be ashamed of claiming an acquaintance with a man who was now a convicted felon (he had not yet been tried), and a wilful murderer, and that the fact of his knowing me,

which they did not for a moment believe, only corroborated the court's previously formed bad opinion of me.

Finding fair words of no avail, I tried on the deep indignation tone, and even with threats took to the "*Civis Romanus sum*" dodge, and thundered the dreaded name of the noble Viscount then at the head of the Foreign Office in their ears.

That seemed to stagger them a bit ; but on examining my passport, which by chance I happened to have with me in my pocket-book, the name of that widely-reputed nobleman was not to be found in the document ; either Lord C——, or Lord M—— I think it was, had been at the Foreign Office when I had taken out that passport for a vacation trip a year or two before. So the great sprawling coat of arms and supporters at the bottom of the document, with the signature, of course, utterly illegible, were somehow different from what they seemed accustomed to. They next became convinced that I was not an Englishman at all ; and one particularly sagacious looking wiseacre, having made out that my residence was described as being in the Isle of Wight, which, as you know, is the case, actually took upon himself to declare that the said island was off the coast of Denmark, and that I was in reality a Danish subject, having the impudence to pass

myself off and to try to frighten them by pretending to be an Englishman. Well, it was getting very late, and the officials very tired, so, after some more altercation, they agreed among themselves that the best way to make sure of me would be to shut me up till the morning; which, even supposing it should all prove a mistake, could not make much difference to me as a private individual.

The long and the short of it all was that I was taken round to the debtors' side of the public prison; and there, not, however, without having knocked over two or three of them, for, finding them alike deaf to any arguments or reason, I lost all command of my temper, and declared that nothing but main force should compel me to undergo such rank injustice, it took no less than four of them to carry me by main force into one of their cells, which was about the size of a respectable dog kennel; and then the door was locked upon me, and I was left to my reflections.

There was not even a chair or stool to sit down upon; nothing but a table or rather hanging shelf attached to the wall by hinges, one of which was broken, and a narrow truckle bed, on which was a very filthy straw palliasse, covered by a more filthy blanket or rug of some description.

As far as I could make out by the light of a lamp

which shone through a small opening over the door, the place itself was not quite so beastly as perhaps I had expected to find it, but the closeness and fusty sensation were almost intolerable.

The only pretence of ventilation, as far as I could make out, was through the hole I have mentioned above the doorway, and a grating of half a foot square made in the door itself.

Through that same grating, for some time after the door had been locked upon me, I could hear a discussion going on, as well as I could make out, at the further end of the corridor, as to my real nationality. I rather fancy my last struggle, and stout resistance to authority, may have done more to convince them than all my arguments and asseverations, though I could not make out all they were cawing about, like rooks at hatching time (to which, by the way, I think I have before compared them), still I could distinguish something of doubts or contrariwise opinions among themselves in the tones of their voices : it ended in one who seemed to have succeeded in out-talking, if not convincing his jabbering companions, coming back to my door, and suggesting that if I really were an Englishman, as I alleged, materials would, if I wished it, be provided to write a note to the British Minister, which should, together with my doubtful passport, be at

once forwarded by a messenger whom they would procure for me.

This offer was made, I suspect, as a deep and subtle test ; but of course I was too glad to jump at it, and should myself have suggested the idea, had I not thought that it would have been refused.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“A FRIEND IN NEED” NOT ALWAYS APPRECIATED.

THE note, stating my predicament and the sum for which I was arrested, was soon written and despatched to our Minister's house in Waisen-Haus Strasse—with my usual ill luck, the secretary, my most intimate friend, was, I knew, away on a few days' visit in the country: old F——, the Minister himself, had gone off to some baths or other for the benefit of the health of one of his precious little black Pomeranian dogs, to whom he was most specially devoted: the only person left to take charge of the affairs and interests of H.B.M. and her travelling subjects, was a harum-scarum young scamp of an attaché, of whom I had but a very slight personal acquaintance, but happened to have heard enough of his habits, to be pretty sure that by that time of night, or indeed since the opera was over, he would be nobody knew where, unless the crafty *Stilskins* could be put upon his track.

Rumple Stilskins himself happened to be the very

first fellow hit upon as a messenger when my letter was taken out to the gate.

He was not allowed, as he greatly desired to do, to come in to see me, but sent in a message to say that he had been to my lodgings, and there hearing of my arrest, had come down after me to the prison.

He had something very particular to tell me, and I, quite forgetting that I had sent him on the special errand of finding out Gorles for me, could not at the time imagine what it could be that he thus wanted.

Not much reckoning upon any answer to my despatch before the morning, I had nothing for it but to make up my mind to bear my fate as philosophically as I could ; and so, carefully eschewing the bed, I curled myself up in a corner, and I suppose must have dozed off in a sort of dog's snooze for some little time.

I was quite surprised to find it was so late when roused up, as I suddenly was by a great clatter of bolts and clanking chains, for all the world like the entry of a "ruthless castellan" and his "murderous myrmidons" in a play. I was surprised, I say, to hear a great clock ring out one. My door was thrown open, and with a great blaze of light, which at first quite bedazzled and struck me stupid, an old white-moustached swell, whom I took to be the head of the whole concern, I mean the police establishment, came

in to tell me that I was free, and at liberty to walk out when I liked.

"Is any one from the British Chancellerie come, then, or waiting to see me?" I inquired. It was not so. "His Excellency the Minister was away from Dresden"—that I knew; "the honourable the secretary was also absent"—of that, as I have said before, I was also aware; "the honourable attaché could nowhere be found"—that I had expected.

"The messenger, therefore, with that natural sagacity for which the sworn chairmen were always so conspicuous, had carried my note and passport to a noble compatriot of mine, whom he knew to be an intimate friend of my own, as indeed he reported that he had, by my own special directions, been employed the greater part of the day in seeking the same gentleman out. That he, although gone to bed, had instantly, like a noble Englishman as he was, taken steps for assisting his compatriot in distress; against whom, but for the unfounded assertions and misrepresentations of the infatuated underling, who had so solemnly declared my Excellency to have been only a Dane, nothing would have induced them to proceed to the extreme measures, for which they now begged me to accept their excuses," and so on.

I fancy they had begun to feel they had rather

put their foot in it, though for my part, I rather wondered that they had not increased the fine for punching their thick heads, in the way I had done, for some of them while lugging me all along the corridor into my cell.

However, having satisfactorily ascertained that I really was an Englishman, I suppose *Stilskins's* testimony had convinced them of that fact; and what was more, having received the amount of the debt and the fine for which I was most illegally held in durance, they only seemed now too anxious to get me clear off the premises at once before morning, "now that all had been paid and so satisfactorily settled by a noble English milord," as the functionary pompously expressed it.

"All paid and settled by a noble English milord?" I said; "but who and where is he?" and I certainly began to wonder whether it was some good fellow, perhaps an old Eton friend, who might remember my name, and staying at one of the hotels on his way through Dresden, had accidentally heard of my detention; or even a stranger taking pity on a compatriot in such a scrape might have generously done the handsome though imprudent thing, in the shape of helping me with a temporary loan.

I was informed that my friend-in-need having sent

back the messenger to ascertain the exact liabilities—those yellow-jacket fellows are all well known, and are sworn in to honesty and secrecy, and may be, and often are trusted with untold value in specie, to say nothing of reputations—had remitted the required sum, a hundred and seventy-eight thalers, odd groschen, which included the fine for insulting the official dignity, by the same hand; begging that the receipt and full discharge for the same might be handed to myself, together with a note which he then presented to me.

Actuated, I think, more by curiosity to know who on earth my generous friend could possibly be than with any another feeling at the moment, though, of course, not slightly grateful and pleased at the same time, I tore open the envelope; and just picture to yourself my astonishment and overwhelming indignation when turning, as I naturally did, to the further end of the last page first, I recognised the signature of —— who do you think? MELCHIOR GORLES!

"MY DEAR LAMBARD (the note ran),—

"I have but this moment heard of your disagreeable position. Your messenger, who can find nobody in at the Chancellerie, very sensibly brought your note on to me, which, taking the liberty of an old friend, I

opened, and am too happy to be able to assist you in your temporary difficulty. I am sorry that I am not able to come myself to you to-night, but am suffering from a severely sprained ankle, which, however, will not, I hope, prevent my starting from Dresden as I intend to do by the 5 a.m. train to-morrow, on most important affairs, which, unluckily for my poor leg, admit of no delay; I am so very sorry thus to be prevented from this chance of personally renewing our old acquaintance. Whenever convenient, as my address may for some time be doubtful, let your London banker pay the trifle, with which I have so luckily been able to accommodate you, into Coutts's to the account of

“Your old friend, and ever most sincerely,

“MELCHIOR GORLES.

“P.S.—Though it is now many years since we have met, I have, you see, taken it for granted that the Mr. Frank Lambard whose note, under the peculiar circumstances as told me by the messenger, I have ventured upon opening, is the same F. Lambard who will remember the above signature as an old Eton schoolfellow; if not, I am only too happy as an Englishman, to be the means of serving any one who bears a once so familiar name.”

I had to read this letter right through and over

again a second time before I seemed to be able to take it in, I was so positively staggered, morally wound-up, so to speak. Then just rolling myself back into my corner, and quite choking as I was with rage and disgust, and a sort of indefinite terror such as one sometimes feels in a nightmare, I regularly set to to blubber, as I had never done since I was a lower boy at school of twelve years old.

The police stood at first gaping at me with astonishment; and then themselves, for there were three or four of them standing in the doorway, seemed suddenly seized with a strong sympathy for what they, I suppose, took for my finely-wrought feelings; and hang me, if the lot of them didn't cast up their eyes to heaven, and with a sort of crooning chorus actually begin to howl and weep in concert with me!

The absurdity, though at the time it only exasperated me more, brought me back into some sort of recollection of myself. Springing up, I ordered them to be gone, and to leave me to myself to get through the night in peace.

"But, pardon; I was free; all demands had been fully settled and satisfied, nothing remained to them but the pleasing duty of ushering me to the outer door."

"Get out!" I said. "You do not suppose I am going

to accept a favour, a token of personal friendship, from the Devil, do you ?”

They all shrugged their shoulders and rolled the yellows of their eyes at me. “Do you think that, even to escape the discomfort of passing a night in this filthy dog-hole, I am going to owe my freedom to a little imp of Satan, whose neck I have every intention of wringing the first time I fall in with him ?—whom I should probably have got hold of and murdered by this time, if you rascals hadn’t got hold of me.”

Now, perhaps, considering that the parties thus strongly addressed had not been behind the scenes, and could not have had an idea of the real circumstances, it is not much to be wondered at, now I can calmly look back to that time, that they should seem to think my sentiments or declarations a little strange. But I was far too enraged and disgusted to consider, or care a rap what they thought.

“But, mein herr,” said the white-muzzled official, “your liabilities and fine are paid ; we have no longer any legal cause or pretence, and therefore no power to detain you here, and our orders are to conduct you at once to the outer gates ; the governor, who has been expressly roused and referred to in this matter, himself desired me to see these orders immediately carried into effect.”

"Then my orders are, you old fool, to get out of this, and go back to your governor and tell him from me that I do not choose to accept the assistance or to acknowledge the payments made on my behalf from a stranger, and a person who, so far from being any friend of mine, I have not even seen for years and never wish to see again, though I have been on the look-out for him, and mean to break every bone in his skin, if not kill him outright, whenever I do find him."

That may, by the way, as it now strikes me, have seemed a scarcely consistent statement.

But never mind ; I would not accept, I would not touch the receipt and release which was offered to me. I vowed I would not go out. Losing again all patience as the puzzled old fellow stood there shrugging and gesticulating, I made such a sudden run at him, that beating a hasty retreat, and stumbling backwards over his subordinates behind, they almost rolled over together in a heap against the opposite wall of the passage. I slammed to the door of my cell upon them, but unfortunately all the bolts and means of fastening being on the wrong side, I was at last overpowered by the united weight of the lot of them outside, and positively (would you believe me ?) having called up further assistance, it took the same four to escort and carry me all the way downstairs, that it had

before required to bring me up ; and having forced me across the court to the gates, we had there a considerable tussle before they succeeded in shoving me bodily out, tossing, as they did, my rejected receipt out after me.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A MORNING CALL RETURNED.

THUS set free in spite of myself, and literally finding myself with what, as the slang goes, is called the "key of the street," that is, locked out everywhere, and no place I could call my own to go to, my first thought was to knock up Gorles, and so catching him before he could make his escape from Dresden to have it out with him without further delay. But when I came to consider, I still did not know where he lived ; his letter, which by-the-bye I had torn into a thousand pieces in my wrath, had, I was sure, no address or date to it.

Besides, as I certainly had in spite of myself accepted the loan of his money, and though I did not wish it, got out of limbo at his expense, there might have been a little awkwardness in forcing a hostile entry upon him that night, without having the where-with about me at once to fling back at him, repudiating his alleged friendship and assistance, and then

if I could have been free from all obligations, denouncing him for his atrociously malicious designs and diabolical machinations against myself personally, and my relations.

But how could I, you see, not having a blessed stiver? So I went to De Lyons' lodgings, and returned the compliment of the previous night to his landlady and himself, by knocking him up, and making him take me in.

I found my worthy friend "*Taraxacum*" tolerably right again, and fairly recovering from his debauch, and, having been in bed all day, declaring himself to feel, as he really seemed, as fresh as a lark.

He would insist upon my occupying his own bed, having no further need of it for himself; but if I would only turn in and make myself comfortable, declared that he meant to start for an early swim as soon as it was light, which it would be in another half hour, or thereabouts.

But I was in little humour for sleep, having my adventures to relate and discuss with my friend, to whom I gave a full and particular account of all, just as I now have done to yourself; not, you may be sure, omitting the extent to which I felt aggrieved and insulted by the way in which the hateful Gorles had forced his unlooked-for and most unwelcome

obligation upon me, and how much I longed, yet felt myself baffled in my longings, for some means of punishing and revenging myself upon him.

“As to where he hangs out,” De Lyons replied, “I could take you there in a brace of shakes, as it is in Moritz Strasse, not a stone’s throw from round the next corner; but at this time of night, or rather to-morrow morning as it is, we should not, I guess, have much chance of gaining admittance without forcing our way in upon him, which feat would probably result in a re-introduction to your *polizei* friends. I quite wondered they did not interfere with us last night, considering the row that was needful under the circumstances both at your own place, as well as Lüttichau Strasse; but those sort of games, you may take your oath, are not to be played two nights running with impunity.

“But as you do not seem to care about bed, why not sit up here through the next three hours, and be up at the railway station in time for the train by which he told you he was to be starting? There you would be sure to nail the little sinner.”

I had despondently to remind my friend of my utter inability to relieve myself of the odious debt, and the scruples I could not help entertaining upon the propriety of thrashing a fellow, as I felt he ought

to be thrashed, until I was free from what I felt to be the disgrace of being under such an obligation to him.

There was no chance, you see, of borrowing or getting the money, in the meantime. I am sure I would gladly have paid cent. per cent. for the hundred and seventy odd thalers, if I could have only got them anyhow before five o'clock. I should like to have been able to have shied them at him in a rattling shower of thaler pieces about his ears, or caught him over the head or shoulders with a good heavy bag full of them.

“Oh ! as to that, if you look upon them for that purpose,” *Taraxacum* cut in, “I think I might, perhaps, muster ten or a dozen knobbly coins, with a few five-franc pieces, or, at least, lead medals amongst them, which, though perhaps not all of them of much use as currency in these parts, would do well enough to pelt him with. They might answer your purpose if you could manage to pick them up and fling them over and over again, as he cuts along, as he would be sure to do. He might think there was the whole sum there, after the opening volley or two ; besides, you see, he would not have much time or, as I calculate, inclination either to stop to count them.”

There was something in the suggestion ; still, on the whole, we did not think that it would exactly do.

“And what is more, my dear fellow,” De Lyons added solemnly, “with the great, the very great power which, as you yourself must be conscious, he certainly has by some means or other acquired over you, there is no saying whether he might not put a spoke in your wheel, either by throwing you then and there into a state of torpor, or so affecting your mind or memory for the time being, that you should lose all control over yourself, and not know what you were about, or whether you were on your head or your heels.

“That power, the magnetic fluid, in fact, or *odyle*, as it is technically called, strong as I know it must be, by what I myself saw of the state you were in last evening, may be increased to an almost inconceivable intensity, by cultivation, and a concentration of volition on the part of Gorles, who thoroughly understands his own powers, and what he is about in these matters.

“It seems strange, when one compares the relative strength and physical build of you two fellows as individuals: but he must certainly at some time or another have contrived to have established a strong *rapport* between your and his own spiritual systems, in which he must have gained a most wonderful pull over you, and no mistake.

“That same pull may, to be sure, be counteracted

by any one knowing, as I happened to do in your case, exactly how the land lay, and so setting to work as I did immediately, to undo the party thus acted upon. But with most folks, who have no notion of even the existence of such strange dodges,—and how few there are who have, or even care to know anything about the simplest outlines of these stunning scientific truths!—there you might be, struck stupid and helpless as if you were blind drunk, until the *odylic* force, unless of course it is renewed, has, so to speak, evaporated of itself.

“Now, Gorles, I remember already telling you, has from his very birth been naturally endowed with a double extra allowance of the said magnetic power; and constantly cultivating and increasing that power as he has all his life been doing, not even sticking at—unless he is much belied—to ‘buckle up’ to and avail himself of the personal assistance, and the good will of——, a powerful Personage I have before alluded to; there is no knowing the depths to which he has not fathomed, or how far, if his fancy or malice should require it, he can not and would not willingly indulge the abuse of the said tremendous secrets of nature which he has thus mastered.

“The professor himself,” De Lyons then went on

to tell me, "looked upon Gorles as quite an equal, if not even almost his superior in magnetic power.

"There was not much love lost between the two, though the former genius wished to keep on terms with the little wretch, as requiring his assistance for the great experiment with the spirit world, in preparation for which the learned man was mainly devoting his whole study and attention, and so they kept up an association, although there was a wide difference which had at one time amounted to a quarrel between them, in regard to the use and ultimate object of their scientific investigations and rather questionable dabbings in the black art.

"The professor, as his faithful disciple had before declared, and I have since had every reason sincerely to believe, was solely influenced by good and the most genuine philanthropic motives, while Gorles, on the contrary, only looked upon the mysterious secrets which were in his keeping as means for securing his own personal malicious, and even more atrocious ends."

Taraxacum had, on the former occasion when he first opened upon this same subject to me, mentioned with a warning the name of Katie De Lorme, in connexion with a discussion which had arisen as to the proper use or abuse of the powers they had acquired,

but he had wandered off on another tack, and I, disgusted at the very idea of having even her dear name brought up among such a set of unscrupulous fellows, had not cared to bring him back again to the unwelcome subject.

But, curious to hear exactly how he had come possessed of that locket, as well as the whole particulars of his extraordinary, though, as it had turned out, entirely successful adventure of the previous night, I let him run on without any interruption, and as far as I could follow all the ups and downs of his story, it was somehow to the following effect :—

CHAPTER XXIX.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

Hamlet, act i. sc. 5.

It is perhaps, you may not be aware, an established fact in the science of mesmerism or magnetism, whichever you choose to call it, that is, according to De Lyons, whom you must bear in mind to be himself a firm believer in all these matters, that as soon as, or even within a considerable time after the proper state of *rapport* has been established between the magnetizer and any other person, although separated by any amount of space, even though they may be in different and distant countries from one another, the influence and magnetic power may still be kept going and continue active between the two thus spiritually connected, by the operator having in his possession anything which has belonged to or come immediately from the other, whom you may call the patient.

As, for instance, a lock of hair, or sometimes a phial of blood, or even some such simple object as a trinket, a glove, or a slipper, has been found by experiments

to answer the purpose. One individual may thus actually obtain a complete knowledge of all that others with whom he is in relation are not only doing but even thinking, or almost going to do or think at a future time ; nay, more, can even exercise a control and direction over those thoughts and acts, and that, as I said, without the slightest reference to distance greater or less. Thus much, I say, seemed to be no more than an old and well-known truth confirmed by many instances, but, as De Lyons went on to inform me, according to more recent discoveries and experiments in their most wonderful, not to say most dangerous powers, the science had progressed, and at last been brought to such an awful pitch, that by the sole exercise of an intense volition on the part of some of the more advanced and enthusiastic performers, patients had been thrown into a state of *coma* and deep trance ; and while thus rendered to all external appearance quite lifeless, their souls or spirits had been separated from their bodies, and actually caused to appear visibly, though De Lyons believed not tangibly, in the presence of those, by the strength of whose irresistible will they had been summoned.

“ Stuff ! ” I said, “ nothing should ever make me believe anything half so impossible or incredible.”

“ That you should have thought and said so forty-

eight hours ago, I should not have been surprised," De Lyons remarked very quietly ; " but after what you have yourself experienced, and witnessing as you did the state your own cousin was in, you are a one-er to convince that there are—as Shakspeare, isn't it, says ?—' more rum things in this queer world than ever were dreamt of in your philosophy,' and no mistake. Still, without meaning to convey anything uncivil, the fact of your not being able to believe, does not make them less true as physical facts, you know." So he went on with his strange story.

It was to this particular branch of *diablerie*, for I can call it no less, that Gorles, it seems, had been devoting his whole time and energies, just about the time that he was so very intimate with the De Lormes ; and having, according to De Lyons, from the very first day he had ever seen poor Katie, done her the honour of fixing upon her as the object of his infernal little affections ; and also very soon finding her to be naturally a highly sensitive and predisposed subject, too delighted at the prospect of gaining a complete and easy influence over her, he had set deliberately to work to put in practice upon her the fearful powers which he was cultivating, and felt increasing within himself.

Professor Zauber, and all the others of the clique,

even I believe the Frenchman, had, with proper good feeling, entirely refused to have anything to do with, or at all countenance the little wretch's proposals, which actually went the length of wishing to cause that young girl to appear in spirit in spite of herself at one of their usual evening meetings, and having thus gained absolute power over her soul, and—Heaven help me when I think of it!—I believe, fiend incarnate as he is, he even dared to hint, having thus got her reputation at his mercy, his unparalleled scheme was to allow her body to be buried as dead, which by the law of that country must be within twenty-four hours after death, and by stealth or bribery recovering her body from the cemetery, and so restoring her soul and spirit of life to her, she would belong entirely to him, and owe her very existence to his powers.

Whether this scheme, utterly wild and impossible as of course it seems, were feasible or not, matters not in judging of the atrocious infamy of him who himself entirely believed in its being so, while concerting and doing his best to induce others to aid him in carrying it out.

Taraxacum also thoroughly believed in its possibility, I am sure, and indeed declared that the very same thing had been tried not long before by one of the principal disciples of the famous Baron von

Reichenbach, and successfully, upon a lady who, being supposed to be really dead, had been buried and rescued from her very grave in the manner described; and whom now they say he has in his power, living nominally as his wife, but in the most abject state of mental, moral, and physical subjection to her resuscitator's will, serving him in the capacity of *clairvoyante*, adviser, and oracle, as well as being the perpetual victim of all his phenomena and scientific experiments.

“It was to this very individual, that when refused and scouted by his usual associates Gorles had gone down for assistance and further instruction to Vienna; and I knew precious well,” continued De Lyons, to go on with the story in his own words, “what he had been after; though when he turned up again here at Dresden he kept as much as he could out of our way, and when that wouldn't do, was quite mum upon the subject, as if he had entirely given up or forgotten the very idea. But I was not going to be humbugged quite so easy as all that, and made up my mind to thwart him, as you know I succeeded in doing.

“Don't you remember my warning you some days ago? but as you seemed to be inclined to cut up rather rough on the subject, and some other matter turning up, I said no more.

“I never dreamt of his having the power he evi-

dently can exercise over yourself ; however and whenever he can have managed to acquire it."

It was then I told De Lyons of my own old Eton adventure with Gorles, of which I have already given you an account.

"Oh, thus and thus is the milk in the cocoa-nut fully accounted for," was his allegorical reply, "which I must confess had, until you now tell me all this, been a very hard nut to crack, and had puzzled me not a little to conceive how on earth, looking at your relative strengths and proportions, the pigmy had contrived to circumvent the giant, as he evidently had, as far as spiritual powers were concerned ; but now I understand it all plainly enough.

"So that knotty point being settled, let me go on.

"Our little friend I am sure had not intended that I, or any of us should even know of his return from Vienna, but I chanced to come across him by accident the very evening of his arrival.

"It was, by-the-bye, on my way home from your own door that very evening on which, as you may remember, I met you coming out of the house in Lüttichau Strasse, and first learned from you your relationship with the fair young lady in question.

"For the sake of something to say, and having you fresh in my mind, I suppose, I mentioned your name,

reminding him that you had both been at the same house at Eton, and telling him of the fact of your having come to make some stay in Dresden. He at first stuck to it that he knew nothing about you, and remembered no such name; but, as the saying is, liars should have patent memories, for almost directly afterwards, upon my going on to remark casually that I had just seen you, and to advise him in a friendly way to mind his eye, if he was still thinking of trying on any of his little games with that interesting young gentleman Ferdy or his pretty sister, I noted a peculiarly nasty twinkle of malice in his queer little eyes, as he wagged his head, saying that he knew nothing and cared less about either the young lady or yourself; but that if you fancied you were to get her all to yourself, that you were very much mistaken; and that no doubt sentimental walks to the Wolfshügel and such places might be very pleasant, but that you might take your oaths that you would never be out together, or have any more of your delightful *têtes-à-têtes* again for the rest of your lives.

“It struck me that was not so bad, considering that he had, within barely five minutes before, utterly disclaimed all knowledge or remembrance of you, but I was puzzled to make out how the deuce the little toad could have known so well where you had been

and what you had been doing ; as I was sure that he had only just turned up again in this city. Of course, if I had been up to all as I am now, of his having those articles in his possession, it would have been all plain enough, your walks to the Wolfshügel or anything else. He is an awful artful dodger, I know ; but even he has not yet, I believe, arrived at the power of being in two places at once, though even that I should be sorry to take upon myself to pronounce to be impossible, as I have no doubt there is a way, if one could only hit upon the secret.

“ Well, in consequence of my conversation with you, for your sake, and, pardon me for venturing to add respectfully, for that of the young lady herself, I determined to keep my eye upon our interesting but dwarfish philosopher.

“ I had a conviction that he had not abandoned his long-cherished scheme, and patiently I watched his goings out and comings in, until, having reason to think that the long-expected moment for the great experiment was at hand, I that evening contrived, never mind how, to gain admittance to his private diggings, while he was gone out, and hid myself in a huge old-fashioned closet, or rather wardrobe, which forms part of the furniture of his room, quite big enough to take me in comfortably, and through the

gaping chinks of whose carved panels I could see well enough all that was going on in the room.

“Gorles and his lately enlisted friend and ally, whom he had brought back with him from Vienna, came in very shortly quite unsuspecting, and, locking themselves in, set to work at their grossly misapplied scientific operations.

“Having, as you know, been a good deal mixed up in that sort of business myself, I of course understood, and was not so much excited by curiosity as probably you, or any one else who were not accustomed to the kind of thing, might have been ; but I kept my wits sharp about me, though for a long time their preliminaries were dull and commonplace enough : Plüffer, which was, as far as I could make out, the colleague’s name, constantly consulting a ragged old manuscript, as black nearly as my hat with age and dust, as well as a large note-book he held in his hand, kept prompting and instructing Gorles in their proceedings, and from time to time repeating sentences of an incantation, which, though I had some notion of their nature from having heard them so frequently discussed, made even me open my eyes a trifle. I don’t care to go into particulars, but, though much was entirely new to me, I knew, as I have said, perfectly well what they were about and preparing to go through with.

“Between them, on a sort of tripod, was a curiously fashioned old concern like a chafing-pot, or rather dish, with a lamp under it, in which, though I could not from my hiding-place at the time exactly make out what it was, that gold trinket had been immersed in some strong chemical stuff, which was burning and threw up a pale blue flame. For five days I overheard one of them mention, as he stirred it, it had been thus soaking.

“They had for some time continued their operations and low mumbled repetitions, when, all of a sudden, Gorles, who now he was in for it seemed thoroughly frightened at the undertaking (for his face was as pale as ashes, and he was visibly shaking all over), caught his accomplice by the arm, and pointing to the other side of the room, stammered out in a whisper, ‘It works, it works! She is here! Don’t you see her?’

“The other fellow, who was as cool as possible the whole time, looked across and bowed courteously, but distantly, just as he would have done to any one whom he did not know, or with whom he had only a very slight acquaintance; and then, turning to the crystal dish, fished out its contents with the hook or some such instrument with which he had previously been stirring up the flame, and putting it, all wet as

it was, on the edge of the table in front of him, began diligently making rapid magnetic passes all over and around it.

“Now, not being myself in a state of *rapport* with either of the parties, though, of course, I was staring with all my might in the direction as indicated by little Gorles, I could not myself see anybody or form whatsoever, though I was sure by their manner and words that they both had the power of doing so ; but I felt quite certain that the spirit of—you may guess who—having left her body, was then present in that very room.

“I could see nothing, I say, but I could distinctly hear a clear, low voice, as of a young girl, just like the tone of a very softly-stirred silver bell, at some tremendous distance, say across the sea.

“I do not mean to say that there was any actual sound striking upon the drums of my ears in the ordinary way of nature—it was more, perhaps, like the sensation of when one sometimes hears one’s own name called in a familiar voice, and turns round to find nobody near ; or have you never had some particular sentence, or, more commonly, an air of music repeated as if close to one’s ears ?

“The voice, though gentle as could be when I first became conscious of it, was reproaching Gorles—

upbraiding him for cruelty—and then seemed to change to entreaties, begging him to have pity, and not to exercise his fearful powers over her.

“Gorles, backed up as he seemed to be by the other’s perfectly collected demeanour, and having somewhat recovered his usual audacity of manner, was speaking in a low tone, as if trying to coax and assure her ; but as he went on, finding his soft tones of persuasion unappreciated, the little beast, growing more familiar, and, as I could see, egged on by the presence and, indeed, winks and nods of the other Devil, worse than himself, began to mock at her prayers and entreaties, and even to tell her that he now held her, as he had the atrocity to say, absolutely in his power.

“I fancy, though I was not quite sure at the time, that the voice uttered your own name, crying bitterly, as it then seemed to be, either begging for you or threatening your resentment and vengeance for their iniquitous treatment of her. The stranger looked inquiringly across at Gorles.

“ ‘ Oh ! we can soon settle him,’ he said, with a gnash of his teeth, as if he would like to have bitten you ; ‘ wherever he may just at this moment happen to be ;’ and taking up that old kid-glove from the mantle-piece — you must have dropped it some-

where, or could that little whipper-snapper of a school-boy, Ferdy, have got it secretly for him ?

“Anyhow, he took it; and having first breathed heavily upon it proceeded to make several careful magnetic passes over it—that, of course, must have been at exactly the very time at which you describe yourself as so singularly overcome on your way home from Lüttichau Strasse.

“‘Now then,’ said Gorles, again turning to his victim, ‘unless you swear to renounce all thoughts of that fellow it will be the worse for——’

“I heard, or rather was conscious of the voice, crying out in the most violent distress, but still as if at the same distance from us.

“I could just stand it no longer, but with a sudden shout which made even Herr Plüffer jump round as if he had been shot, I burst in upon them from my hiding-place, made a grab at the glove with one hand and the trinket with the other, which in my swoop I knocked under the table: crash went over the simmering chafing-dish, making an awful smash as it and the lamp together came to grief in the struggle which ensued.

Profiting by the light of the flaming stream which was running along upon the ground, Gorles made a dash down after the locket, and was making off with it to the door, but having had to unlock

it, I was round, and close after him as he rushed up some stairs which were just outside. I caught fast hold of the little beggar by the leg and pulled him downstairs again with a jerk enough to have dislocated his limb for life, and rolling him right over wrenched the locket from between his fingers, but not before it was quite broken and strained in the scuffle ; I fancy myself he was trying to extricate the hair from it as he rushed along. He bit and spit at me with furious rage, for all the world like a mad cat ; but as long as I had got what I wanted I did not care. Now, although I understood and had witnessed enough of their proceedings to feel sure that I had spoilt their game, I had not sufficient confidence in myself to know exactly how to act, or what steps would be necessary to counteract and stop the serious mischief and dreadful effects of the rascal's misdoings. What became of the confederate, by-the-way, in the tussle I do not know.

“Finding my way down into the open street below with the spoils of victory safe in my possession, I luckily bethought me of my dear friend, the Professor, and went straight off to him for his advice and directions in the matter ; he was, of course, the man of all others to tell me what to do, if I could only find him ; but that was no very easy matter.

“It must have been a couple of hours or so before I run him down in one of his less accustomed haunts, and had told him my business.

“Though expressing the greatest disgust and indignation at Gorles’s conduct in regard to an innocent and helpless young lady, I could see that in spite of those better feelings he immediately took the most immense interest in the result of the experiment, for he made me repeat all over again most minutely every detail and particular of all I had seen and observed ; and as I told him all as closely and accurately as I could, his queer eyes quite glistened and flashed through the glasses of his spectacles with excitement.

“Having at last heard and digested all I had to tell him, upon my again urgently pressing him for advice in the matter, for the young lady’s sake, he desired me to lose no time in finding you out, and procuring your special assistance for the recovery of your fair cousin, as, judging from all I had told him (we had talked you and your affairs over amongst ourselves at other times, if you must know), there would probably exist a more active sympathetic *rapport* between her and yourself—next, of course, to the evil-working influences of Gorles—than with any one else in the world.

“He moreover not a little staggered me by, after keeping me certainly upwards of an hour thus dis-

cussing the subject, impressing upon me that there was no time to be lost ; for though he knew that the same phenomenon had been on other occasions successfully carried out, when the spirits of patients thrown into a magnetic slumber had been caused to leave their bodies, and to return again even after the lapse of some days, yet in more than one recorded instance, it had unfortunately happened, that not having been separated even more than six or eight hours, mortification had commenced before the renewal of the electric principle of life, thus artificially suspended ; and that the spirit, as if unable or unwilling to resume its functions in a frame on which decay had set in, had, as it were, evaporated, and thus actual death had been the result."

With this piece of information from his scientific friend, it is not much wonder that De Lyons experienced, as he declared to me, a feeling of intense anxiety, and did his very best to get me up and to the rescue in time. After his first unsuccessful attempt upon my rooms, he described himself as at his wit's end to know what to be at ; he felt that it would be useless and hopeless for him to attempt by any means, fair or foul, to gain admission to the supposed death-chamber of poor Katie ; for that there was no chance of their even listening to his wild story.

I was not a little touched at the joy and real unselfish satisfaction evinced by the worthy fellow, proportionate as it was to the anxieties he had gone through at the eventual success and reward of all his troubles, after having acted implicitly in obedience to the directions of his friend, the Professor.

And so, after a considerable pause for reflection, when he had thus brought his story to an end, *Taraxacum* added, "You say that Gorles is off again by this morning's train, and, I suppose, his worthy familiar with him? I wonder whether he is aware of the De Lormes' sudden departure which you tell me of?"

"He cannot, think you, be following them with any intention of again trying on any of his tricks in that quarter?" I exclaimed, almost involuntarily, as a disagreeable thought just flashed through my mind.

"More likely," replied De Lyons, "to get clear out of your way, as he must guess that I should tell you all, and naturally would be on the look out for your heavy resentment. I certainly give him no small credit for his deep cunning in jumping at the chance as he has done, of paying that money to get you out of limbo, and thus, just as, of course, he must have had the wit to foresee, effectually putting a stopper upon any violent measures which you may have conceived against him, but which you could hardly in common decency

carry out as long as you are under pecuniary obligations to him.

“ Now, a commonplace, every-day fellow, under the same circumstances, would have thought himself safe and all right in leaving you where you were, without reflecting that you would have been sure to have regained your liberty in the morning, and have had plenty of time, and no moral impediment, such as you now labour under, of following him up and smashing him into small pieces the same afternoon. To give the little Devil only his due, he is a proper deep one : it was a first-rate card, and a thoroughly good finesse, playing it just as he has done.

“ However, by this time he is clear off and away, for I declare there is six o’clock striking, and it is such a glorious bright morning that I shall go out, and I advise you to come with me, instead of going to bed, for which you do not seem much more inclined than myself, and a jolly good swim will do us both all the good in the world.”

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